

CHRISTMAS 1911

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THE
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THE RED BOOK

MAGAZINE

EDITED BY KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN

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in Vaudeville
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The suction of tons of mud engulfing Butch pulled at the arm as if to tear it from its socket
To accompany "Two Less One, Leaves One"—page 278

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

Vol. XVIII



Number 2



Bondage by Beatrice Harraden

*Author of "Ships that
Pass in the Night," etc.*
Illustrated by Edmund Frederick



I

"Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty."

Emily Brontë.

IT was about half-past twelve at night, and Robert Eriswell sat alone in his great studio, at Queen's Gate. He was profoundly moved. He and his wife had been to see the French Company at the Royalty Theatre, and the first piece given was from Alfred de Musset's poem "*Les Nuits*," that wonderfully beautiful duologue of the *Poet* and his *Muse*. Madame Bargy had impersonated the *Muse* with an idealism which had stirred to renewed life the passivity of his artist's spirit. He heard her voice echoing in his ears:

"*Poëte, prends ton luth; c'est moi, ton
immortelle.
Prends ton luth, prends ton luth! je
ne peux plus me taire.
Qu'as tu fait de ta vie et de ta liberté?*"

"Poet, take up thy lute; it is I, thy Muse.
Take up thy lute, take up thy lute! I can-
not longer keep silence.
What have you done with your life and your
liberty?"

He saw the whole scene before him. The *Poet* in his lonely room, given over to the troubles of his heart, and forgetful of his life's work. The *Muse* calling to him, pleading with him, reasoning with him, and reminding him of all the fair and lovely themes awaiting the music of his genius. Why was he silent? What had he made of his life and his liberty? Why should he not take his lyre and sing once more? Did he not know that Spring was born that night, and that the wild rose had broken into flower?

Robert Eriswell sprang up from his chair and paced restlessly up and down the room. What had he himself been making of his life and his liberty? His own muse had for many long months been asking him insistently that searching question, and he had turned a deaf ear to her entreaties and had offered a stubborn resistance to her exhortations. Then, discouraged, she had abandoned him. She had left him to his wealth, his ease, his worldliness and his prison-walls of commonplace content.

But to-night, the message which he

had refused to hear direct from her, had reached him from another source. He saw himself in the *Poet* whose lyre had been silent. He saw in the *Poet's* unsung songs, his own unfinished pictures, his own unrealized ideas.

He met himself face to face, and suffered agonies of remorse in the encounter. He saw that he had sold his birthright when he married that rich and beautiful woman to whom the visions of the spirit were unknown joys. She had weaned him first from the originality of his ideas. Conventional herself, she demanded, with an unconscious tyranny, conventional ideas and thoughts from him. Then, by slow degrees, she weaned him from his work itself, from his fine ambition, from his belief in the necessity of expression. For, being commonplace, she recognized no need for wings with which to soar above the low-lying plains of every-day life. His wings made her uneasy. She clipped them, without his knowledge, and hedged him round with love and kindness and all the so-called benefits of wealth. She held him in subjection by her beauty and her physical charm. She dominated his outer circumstances by her money. She crushed with unthinking cruelty, the frail flowers of his mind. She lured him from his own regions in which he had wandered over mysterious and trackless paths, and led him by the hand to her own world, where the high roads of every-day life stretched baldly to the North, the South, the East, the West.

He did not judge her. He judged himself. If, at the beginning, he had been true to his genius, loyal to his ideals, he would never have suffered the silken bonds of passion to become as iron fetters of custom. He would have rent them asunder, and stood free, free to express himself once more in his own language, free to choose the untrodden desert, the hidden trail. But now it was too late. He had sold forever his birthright of detachment, without which no poet could sing, no musician awaken the interchords of life.

Yet was it too late?

Again he heard the words:

"Poète, prends ton luth, prends ton luth; c'est moi, ton immortelle!"

He stood listening. A smile lit up his face. Some pent-up gladness escaped and flooded his whole being. He switched on all the lights in the studio, and, with a joyous alertness, began to drag out some of his old canvasses and open some of his old sketch-books and portfolios. Here were the songs unsung; here were the unfulfilled fancies of the spirit; here the unrecorded thoughts which had once dominated him. They encompassed him now. He was in his own world again, restored if only for the passing moment, to the true companions of his mind. He looked at one sketch and said aloud:

"Yes, I remember distinctly the idea I intended to carry out here. I must work it out on the same lines."

He looked at an unfinished watercolor of Twilight, and said aloud:

"Yes, I remember deciding that it was not mysterious enough. And I was right. Not nearly mysterious enough. I must have another try at it and see what I can do now."

He examined this, he criticized that, sometimes silently, sometimes with spoken words. He was so intent on what he was doing, that he did not hear the door open, and did not know that Edith, his wife, was standing watching him. When at last he looked up and saw her, the sketch which he was holding, fell from his hands. He realized, with a shudder of apprehension, that the moment had come when he must declare himself, and find some means of setting himself free from the trammels which impeded his life's work.

Edith's very first words helped him.

"What on earth are you doing here, Robert?" she said. "Come, dear, leave all this rubbish and come to bed. Do you know it is nearly two o'clock?"

"Rubbish," he said bitterly. "You call all this rubbish? Well, Edith, let me tell you that it is the only thing in my life which is not rubbish."

She stared at him in astonishment. She did not believe that she had heard his words aright. She sank onto the

couch and leant back, a beautiful, regal figure of a woman, clad in a sumptuous dressing-gown of that Florentine blue which always accentuated her loveliness. For a few minutes she did not speak. But at last she said slowly, as though trying to fathom some hidden depth of meaning:

"The only thing in your life which is not rubbish."

"It is hateful of me to have put it in that way," he exclaimed eagerly. "It is insulting. I'm bitterly sorry."

He had risen and come towards her; but she signed to him with her hand to keep at a distance.

"How would you put it in another way?" she asked. "I'm curious to know."

He was silent.

"I think that I have the right to know," she added gravely.

Robert Eriswell stood there in the greatest despair; for he knew he could never make her understand his meaning. Looking back over his four years of married life, he realized that he had tried from time to time to impress on her the needs, the importunities, the imperious demands of the creative spirit. Nothing had reached her. She was entirely without imagination. Nothing would reach her now. A type of mind like hers could never learn to decipher the invisible letters of an unknown language guessed at easily by another type.

Perhaps even at this juncture he would have given up the matter as hopeless, and succumbed as ever before, to her physical charms and temperamental ascendancy, but that, echoing in his ears, whispering to his heart, throbbing in his brain, he heard those magic words:

"Poëte, prends ton luth, poëte, prends ton luth; c'est moi, ton immortelle!"

"I think I have the right to know," his wife repeated still more gravely.

If she had shown anger or grief, his task would have been easier. If she had even vaguely hinted at the benefits which she had conferred on him, she would at least have given him the chance of explaining to her that these benefits were not benefits to him, but definite disas-

ters. If she had reproached him for his rudeness, he could have answered, justly enough, that he had been stung by her thoughtless, scornful allusion to his work. But she gave him no opening; and many a stronger man than Robert Eriswell had been forced, in a similar predicament, to capitulate to circumstance, and wear for evermore the livery of an intolerable serfdom. So that his courage, by comparison with the usual mental cowardice of men, was something immense, amazing.

He leaned against the wall, with his arms folded tightly together. His face was ashen, but his eyes shone with a brightness which, in the old days, had ever been their true characteristic.

"I will put it in this way, Edith," he began in a low voice. "A poet needs certain things to stimulate his creative powers. And without them his gifts are laid waste. He needs freedom of spirit. He needs mental detachment. He needs an atmosphere where he can breathe. A poet should be solitary. More or less he must be a soul set apart. He is of the world, and yet not of it. He must climb the mountain-side alone. He must descend into the abyss alone."

He paused. She made no sign.

"Inspiration is the frailest of frail flowers," he went on, his courage now becoming greater by the mere using of it. "It is dependent for its very existence on fostering circumstances. Without these, it dies, or else it meets with a far worse fate than death—degeneration into the commonplace. And this is my fate. Oh yes, I know it—I've known it all the time, Edith. At first I fought with it, but my passionate love for you overcame my resistance. I said to myself after each defeat: 'The world of dreams—the poet's world—my own world well lost for love of her.' After a time I struggled no more. But when I ceased to struggle, I knew in my heart of hearts that I had begun to deteriorate. I knew that wealth and ease and worldly position and all those garish things which I had despised in the past, were taking firm hold of me, in body, brain and soul. And then it was that you said to me: 'I

have moulded my darling into shape at last. I have made him care for the life for which I care.' Do you remember saying those words to me, or have I dreamed them?"

"No, you have not dreamed them," she said slowly. "I remember saying them."

He scarcely heard her answer, but goaded on by fierce anger with himself, for the madness and folly of these lost years, he continued with increased intensity:

"If I had not been a fool, that speech of yours alone might have warned me. I believe it did warn me for the moment. But it came too late for any continuous effect. I had allowed myself to be moulded into the commonplace. Oh, don't think that I am judging or blaming you—I am judging and blaming myself. I am the one in fault. I had the larger knowledge. I had the wider outlook. I had the inner call. I ought to have known that your world could never be my world, and that I should only cease to be an alien in it, when I had completed the sale of my birthright and given up my last lingering aspiration. You couldn't have known that. I never told you. I scarcely told myself. And if I had told you, you would not have understood. I—"

He broke off suddenly, for he had glanced at her face and had seen its expression of blank bewilderment.

"You don't understand now," he exclaimed hopelessly.

"No," she said quietly, "I don't."

She rose from the couch and stood for a moment as though in a dream. Then without a word, without a look, without a trace in her manner, of anger or indignation, she left her husband alone in his studio.

II

Robert Eriswell stood staring at the door through which his wife had passed. He was paralyzed by the suddenness of her departure, and by the certainty that he had failed to make himself understood, and had only succeeded in be-

wildering her. It would have been some consolation to him if she had been angry with him. Anger at least implied a certain amount of activity of intelligence. Anger could be dealt with, either successfully or unsuccessfully. Anger did not necessarily exclude every ray of hope, and every possibility of resilience. A dull, deadening despair took possession of him, and he glanced round his luxurious studio, and saw in it a barred and barricaded prison-cell, from which all escape had been made entirely impossible.

But suddenly, in a rather dark corner of the room, he caught sight of Will Beaudesart's portrait, on which the light from one of the electric lamps was shedding a remarkable radiance. Beaudesart's eyes were looking at him in their kindly, mischievous way, and his humorous lips seemed on the point of addressing some cheery remark to his old friend. A great heart hunger for Will came over Robert Eriswell.

"I shall go to him," he said. "I shall go now."

The clock struck two.

"Two o'clock," he said. "But that doesn't matter. Will's hours were always peculiar."

For a moment he smiled as the remembrance of the old, happy, irresponsible days swept over him. Then he slipped on an overcoat, stuffed a few cigars into one of the pockets, clapped on his hat, and let himself noiselessly out through the garden entrance. He stepped into a dark and chilly night, but he breathed a sigh of relief, and went quickly on his way to Beaudesart's studio in Messina Road, St. John's Wood. Good luck attended him, and for the greater part of the way he got a lift in a hansom. He rapped at the studio door. He used his old rap, their secret sound of comradeship and jolly fellowship. There was no answer. He knocked again, and this time with one or two more of the old familiar sounds. Suddenly the door was thrown open, and Will Beaudesart appeared, in shirt sleeves, and with his pipe tucked tightly in a corner of his mouth.

"I couldn't believe my ears, old fel-



"The only thing in your life which is not rubbish"

low!" he said excitedly. "Couldn't believe my own ears! Thought I was dreaming."

There was no mistaking the welcome in his voice and his manner, and Robert Eriswell felt something like a renewal of hope and happiness, as he followed his friend into the grubby, workaday old studio, the scene of much good cheer, honest work and irresponsible revelry in the past. Nothing seemed changed. The same disorder reigned around. The same lay figure occupied its old position in the corner, and was posed in its usual menacing attitude. The traditional sausages and bacon were frying in a saucepan over the gas-ring, and a bottle of the same familiar Scotch whisky was waiting to be uncorked.

"Just in time for dinner," Beaudesart said, flourishing a fork gaily. "Heavens, I'm hungry. Been at work all the evening. Have had a devil of a rush doctoring up some Spanish scenes for *The Sphere*. You can help me, old chap. You used to be a regular dab at that sort of thing. Regular sort of handy man, weren't you? Too rich now, perhaps?"

"Yes, Will, that's the trouble," Eriswell said with a half laugh, sinking down into the armchair. "Too rich. Done for."

Beaudesart stood still, paused in the midst of his cooking, shot a keen glance at his friend, and saw the sadness written large on his face.

"Poor old Bob," he said gently. "So it has come."

Eriswell nodded.

"It had to come," Beaudesart added. "You were never meant for that sort of life."

"No," Eriswell said. "And I told Edith to-night. I told her that I—"

He broke off, and leaned back wearily, as though the effort of speaking were too much for his strength. Quick as thought, Beaudesart uncorked the whisky bottle, mixed a whisky and soda, and put the glass into Eriswell's hand. Eriswell took a long draught of it, and then watched Beaudesart attacking his savory meal. A smile broke over the sorrowfulness of his face.

"You at least haven't sold your birth-right, old Will," he said.

"No, but I've done almost everything else except that," Beaudesart answered.

"It seems to me as if nothing else matters, if only one has not done that," Eriswell replied.

There was a pause. Beaudesart gave Maria, the black cat, some bacon ends and poured some milk into her saucer. Eriswell drew his cigars from his pocket, and handed them to his friend.

"Crumbs from the rich man's table, Will," he said, smiling.

"Ah, I've no objection to the crumbs, I can tell you," Beaudesart answered gaily. "Mighty good crumbs I should say. The best cigars in the world."

"Yes," Eriswell said, and he lit one and watched Beaudesart light his and nod approval.

"The same idea has been carried out all along the line, Will," he said after a pause. "Nothing has been too good for me. But it hasn't been what I've wanted. I tried to tell Edith this to-night. She—she didn't understand."

"How could you expect her to understand, old man?" Beaudesart put in gently. "A different language altogether. She wouldn't be able to learn even the rudiments. No fault of hers. A person can't help being born commonplace. Rich and beautiful and commonplace. No fault of hers."

"No, you're right," Eriswell answered. "No fault of hers. Mine has been the fault all through, for I knew more. And I ought to have made a sensible use of my knowledge and refused to allow myself to be drawn out of my natural sphere of work and life."

Then, in his own way, by degrees, unasked, uncoerced, Eriswell told his story, unburdened his heart, and dwelt on the gradual weakening and deadening of his ideals and ambitions, and the growing consciousness of his spiritual and mental deterioration. He was entirely frank about himself. He said that no one realized better than himself that if he had been great enough, he could have triumphed over the temptations of wealth and ease, and trampled over the

barriers which divided him from his own rightful kingdom. Something in his temperament had prevented him from being able to do this. Some inherent weakness in his nature had hindered him from recovering his lost ground.

"But the whole time, Will," he said excitedly, "yes, the whole time, that inner voice has been calling me: '*Poëte, prends ton luth, Poëte, prends ton luth, c'est moi, ton immortelle.*' I've tried not to hear it. But to-night, at the theatre, the message was unmistakable. The message was for me. For if ever a man was impelled against his own will to receive a direct message, I am he. I went most unwillingly, to that theatre, and you see, I was destined to hear a brother-poet calling clearly to me from far-off space. The voices of all those who have believed in me were merged in that one voice—yours amongst them, Will. I had to come and tell you. We all end by coming to you."

Will made no comment, asked no questions, offered no suggestions. He had learnt to know that life, which for him had been extraordinarily simple, was not necessarily simple for other people. He had been born with a few definite necessities of spirit. Other things to him were not even superfluous; they were non-existent. For him, life meant work, giving expression to one's individuality, guarding one's birthright of freedom. So, as Eriswell had said, they all came to him, and laid their be-reftness before him, sometimes with words, and sometimes in silence. They had, most of them, sacrificed much of what was best, to attain to things which, in the end, did not count. They loved and honored him for being able to keep what they themselves had lost wholly, or in part.

Thus they found their way towards his studio as towards a lighthouse in a great waste of waters. The passage of time made no difference to their purpose. They knew that the lapse of years, the separation brought about by circumstances, were mere unimportant details never entering into Will's large interpretation of life and comradeship. They

felt sure that their place was waiting for them, and that once there, they would scarcely believe that there had been any interruption to their intimate intercourse of former days. This had been Robert Eriswell's belief; and as he sat in his old chair which had ever been indisputably his, and poured out his heart to his friend who understood, he forgot that, owing to his wife's dislike of Will Beaudesart, he had for the last years dropped away from the old companionship. He forgot this so completely that he made a curious remark, not once, but several times:

"Well, at least Edith was not able to separate you and me, Will," he said. "At least she was not able to separate you and me, old fellow."

Will stared at him in astonishment for a moment, and some words rose to his lips. But, suddenly, the whole matter became clear to him, and he checked any exclamation of surprise. He saw that the unreality of the last four years of his friend's life had become obliterated in the reality of a few minutes' true kinship of spirit. He was greatly stirred. He put aside his half-smoked cigar and turned impulsively to Eriswell.

"Bob," he said, "you must break through this bondage. You must free yourself somehow. I don't know how. I don't pretend to know how. I don't know how much you love her, or whether you love her at all. I don't want to know. But you must free yourself somehow. You must win back your liberty of spirit, and continue to justify to yourself, as well as to the world, the splendid fame which your work has won. I believe you will do your finest work yet—yes, old fellow, your very finest. The thoughts pent up in you during this barren time, will burst out into flower when you are free: You missed your way for a bit, that's all. You got into an inclosure. But the open moors lie all around you, and you'll win them yet. By Jove! I see your finest picture before me now. I don't know the subject and it isn't even begun. But I see it and know it to be yours. And it is so full of the finest thought and feeling

that even commonplace people are stirred and awed. Even your wife."

"It would indeed have to be something overwhelmingly great," Eriswell said with a half smile.

"So it will be," Beaudesart answered gravely. "I'm as sure of that as I am of my love of liberty."

"You put a brave heart into me," Eriswell said excitedly, springing up from his chair. "I see the picture myself, Will. I see it this moment!"

He dashed to the easel, snatched up a piece of cardboard and a crayon and began sketching a group of figures in his own rapid way which, in the old days, used to inspire Will with envy and pride. He glanced at Eriswell now with a smile of quiet satisfaction, turned to his own work, and went on with it in silence.

"He'll do," he thought. "He'll do. He'll break through his bondage somehow. But he'll have to be helped. Can I help him? No. He'll have to do it himself. No, he can't, silly fool. He never could stand alone. Always came whining like a baby when things went wrong with him. Who's to help him? Must I? Suppose I must. And how? Go and remind her that he's a genius—an acknowledged genius—a famous man, and that she's all very well in her way—but—damned commonplace."

A smile broke over his face.

"Well, why not?" he answered to himself. "That's the whole trouble."

He shook his head and evidently rejected the scheme as being too preposterous; but there was no doubt that it continued to haunt him, for at intervals he paused in his task and whispered to the black cat:

"Damned commonplace, Maria, I tell you. That's the whole trouble."

Suddenly, after they had been working for half an hour or so, Eriswell called out:

"There now, Will! I've got it. It came to me in a flash, as you spoke. You waved your wand, old man, and it came. Look here. I'll tell you my idea about it now. No—not now. My word, though, I'm tired—worn out."

He drew a deep breath, a breath of happiness, of freedom, of mental and spiritual release. His face was radiant. His eyes were shining. He bore little resemblance to the broken, nerveless man who had knocked at the studio an hour or two ago.

"My word, though, I'm tired," he repeated. "Fearfully happy, but worn out—"

Without another word he threw himself upon the couch, and in a few minutes was fast asleep from sheer exhaustion and effort. Will covered him with a warm rug, and watched by his side until he was satisfied that all was well with him. It was evident that for the moment nothing was troubling Robert's spirit. The complications of his life had passed from his remembrance, and he was smiling in his sleep, dreaming perhaps of the joy of re-awakened creative power.

Will crept softly to the easel and studied the sketch.

"What a curious mystery," he said to himself. "All that genius bricked up by a commonplace woman not worthy of the honor of washing his paint brushes! Well, he must be rescued somehow or other. Heaven knows how. I don't know. I haven't the ghost of an idea what to do. The only thing I can think of is to go and tell her she is damned commonplace. Perhaps that would be better than nothing. After all, it's simple enough."

He lit his pipe and went back to his own work smiling.

"It's simple enough here," he thought. "But by Jove, it wouldn't be simple there. Still, if I can't hit upon any other plan, I'll stick to this one."

But plans of action were not within Will's scope. He smoked, worked and made valiant attempts to grapple with the difficulty of the situation. His brow became puckered in the great effort which his brain was making to find some solution of this perplexing problem. Finally, as the clock struck six, a merciful drowsiness stole over him.

"Nothing else to be done," he murmured. "Positively nothing else. Must go and tell her she's—"

He fell asleep.



She tore them into pieces and trampled the fragments

III

When Edith Eriswell left her husband's studio, she went slowly up to her bedroom, feeling her way vaguely as one in a dream. She remained for a long time in a state of entire bewilderment. But at last, after a spell of painful passivity her thoughts gathered themselves together into something approximating to coherence, and she was able to recall her husband's extraordinary words, the tense expression of his face and the excitability of his manner. It was characteristic of her mind that she did not for one moment dwell on the abstract side of his remarks. For all she cared, anyone might climb mountains alone. Anyone might descend to abysses alone. What roused her and took hold of her with accumulating intensity, was the remembrance that she had given him all she had to give, herself, her wealth and the many benefits of her social position, and that he had told her deliberately he regarded them only as mere rubbish. And this was her reward for having loved this man with passionate devotion. She recalled her patient and persistent efforts to rouse him from his queer, dreamy ways and awaken his interest in the new pleasures which were spread before him. She remembered how she had striven and striven to wean him away from his easel, reminding him repeatedly that there was no need for him to paint since she had money enough for all their most luxurious wants, and that all he now had to do, was to enjoy himself with her and free his mind from those dull plans and schemes of work to which she had at first listened so indulgently. She had endured a martyrdom of boredom until she had finally succeeded in whipping him into shape. Yes, she did remember her words and the occasion on which she used them: 'At last I have moulded my darling into shape.' And apparently it was her own delighted approval of the change in him that made him realize that he had deteriorated. This was all that he thought of her codes—this was his estimate of the circumstances in

which she had placed him. The pride of the beautiful and rich woman whom everyone in her set had always courted, praised and admired, was wounded to the quick. Her vanity was humiliated. Her self-esteem was outraged. His scorn seemed to her an unforgivable insult, and his ingratitude an unhealable wound.

She was unable, with her limited understanding, to grasp any single one of his points, or to make any allowance for his difference of temperament and for his nervous sensibility. That which was precious in his nature was just precisely that which she desired most to stamp out in him. She believed that she had nearly succeeded in her task, when all at once, without any warning, this "something" in him rose up and defied her, this unknown "something" which, so she felt instinctively, had always been an enemy to her. It was in order to fight more easily with this secret foe that she had gradually separated him from his old haunts and his old comrades, and especially from Will Beaudesart, to whom she had from the beginning taken a profound dislike.

She walked up and down her bedroom, revolving the whole matter in her mind, when suddenly, in the midst of her conflict of thoughts and emotions, the idea seized her that perhaps her husband had been seeing some of his old friends.

"Yes," she said excitedly, "that would explain some of it. Perhaps Beaudesart has been putting some of his ridiculous notions into Robert's head again. Yes, yes—that's it."

She stood still a moment.

"Yes, that's it," she said slowly, as though recalling some forgotten details. "I remember now. Robert was not himself on that Ranelagh day. Nor at Ascot, nor at the Carlton the other night. He wasn't himself at the bridge drive last Wednesday. He—"

She broke off and flung her arms over her head.

"Of course—of course, I understand it all now!" she exclaimed. "Beaudesart's the one. He has been seeing Beaudesart again. Well, at least Robert shall

hear what I think of that friendship—he shall hear now—this moment, yes, this moment.”

The mere thought of Will Beaudesart had always roused a devil in her. She dashed to her door, opened it violently, rushed downstairs, angrily switched on all the electric lights everywhere, in the hall, the dining-room, the drawing-room, the library, and finally broke like a tornado into the studio.

“Robert,” she began, “that friend of yours, Beaudesart—”

She started back. He was not there. No one was there. Only one lamp was burning, in the corner nearest the garden door. It lit up the portrait of Will Beaudesart. The kind eyes seemed to mock her. The humorous mouth taunted her. She turned away from the picture in an access of rage. Instinct told her that her husband had gone to his friend. Suddenly her eyes caught sight of the water-color sketches and studies which lay strewn about: the songs unsung, the unfulfilled fancies of an artist’s spirit. She stooped down, picked them up, tore them recklessly into pieces and trampled the fragments beneath her feet.

Then, horrified with what she had done, she fled to her room.

IV

As Will Beaudesart stood on Mrs. Eriswell’s doorstep about eleven o’clock that same morning, his courage and determination underwent a serious though momentary relapse. It was one thing to face Robert’s wife at a safe distance; it was quite another thing to confront her at close quarters and find the nerve to tell her a few uncompromising truths. It struck him suddenly that he had set himself an impossible task, and that his easiest way out of the difficulty was to beat an instant retreat before he changed his mind again. He hesitated, however, and was lost.

“No, I must see her,” he said doggedly. “I must see her, and tell her what I think of her.”

In a few minutes he found himself in the library awaiting her arrival on the

scene. He walked restlessly about the room, glanced at the pictures, picked at the newspapers, looked at the titles of some of the books, and finally arranged his tie before the overmantel mirror. That act was ever regarded by his friends as a symbol of inflexible resolution. It meant that he had stiffened himself, and that all the world might advance against him in solid phalanx. So, when at last Edith Eriswell deigned to grant him an audience in her boudoir, he was well prepared for the encounter.

There was no trace on her beautiful face of her recent outbreak of turbulence. Her manner was calm; her voice was low and subdued. Will, quick to observe, noticed the sorrowful dimness of her eyes.

She began without any preliminaries.

“I conclude that my husband is with you, Mr. Beaudesart,” she said.

“Yes, Mrs. Eriswell,” he said.

“I suppose he has sent you?” she asked indifferently.

“No,” Beaudesart replied, shaking his head. “He is fast asleep. He has no idea that I am here.”

“And you ask me to believe that?” she said with a slight laugh.

“No,” Beaudesart replied quietly. “I don’t ask you to believe anything. All the same Bob *is* fast asleep on the couch in my studio. He threw himself there when he’d sketched out his new picture—threw himself there and went fast asleep almost immediately.”

“His new picture,” she repeated slowly. “Oh, I suppose he has been painting it in your studio, then.”

“Painting it in my studio?” Beaudesart said. “Why, I haven’t seen a sight of Bob for more than two years, until last night. No, he had one of those sudden and mysterious inspirations peculiar to a great genius.”

She made no comment on his words, but she noted them well.

“If my husband has not sent you, why have you come?” she asked, after a pause.

“I’ve come to tell you something,” Beaudesart said uneasily.

"What have you come to tell me?" she asked coldly.

Beaundesart remained silent, trying to summon all his courage together for this ordeal.

"What have you come to tell me?" she insisted.

"I've come to tell you," he said, "that you are—that you are—"

He broke off. His self-appointed task was too difficult, and the look of sadness in her eyes appealed to his kindness of heart. It was obvious that she had been passing through a time of intense suffering.

"Well," she urged. "Say what you please. No one, surely, need hesitate at this hour to hurt my feelings."

"That you are—you must forgive me, Mrs. Eriswell—that you are—er—er—commonplace," he said, jerkily.

He drew a breath of relief and waited for the oncoming storm. But, to his immense surprise, his audacious statement occasioned no outburst of anger from Edith Eriswell. She rose from her chair, and stood for some time in silence by the window. At last she turned to Beaundesart, and said quite quietly, as though she were not speaking of herself, but of some one else:

"Yes, I believe you are right, Mr. Beaundesart. I *am* commonplace. Come with me into Robert's studio, and I will show you what I did last night."

He followed her, wondering at her words and at her forbearing manner towards him which, on all other occasions, when he had never deserved her ill-will, had always been so inexplicably hostile. When they stood in the studio, she pointed to the water-color sketches and studies torn up and lying strewn upon the floor.

"The destruction wrought by a commonplace woman," she said almost inaudibly.

"Yes, yes," Beaundesart murmured, shaking his head sorrowfully.

Then in his simple, frank way he stretched out his hand to her and said gently:

"I am so truly sorry for you."

The note of sincerity in his voice, and

the unexpected kindness brought a flush to her face. She gladly took the hand held out to her, and was more than grateful for this little sign of human sympathy, even though it came from this man whom she had always disliked.

"Thank you, Mr. Beaundesart," she said. "I assure you I've been fearfully in need of a word of good cheer."

"Well, it's a funny thing it should come from me of all people, isn't it?" he said quaintly.

"Yes," she answered with a ghost of a smile.

There was an interval of painful silence, during which they both stared at the deplorable wreckage before them.

Suddenly Will Beaundesart was seized with one of his happy impulses, the outcome, literally, of his simplicity of heart.

"Look here, Mrs. Eriswell," he said cheerily, "it's no use our staring at this scene as though we were two idiots. We must buck up. Now the first thing to be done is to save what we can of these precious pieces of paper. You tore 'em up, and you must roll up your sleeves, as it were, and help me to put them together again. I think some of 'em can be saved, don't you? Upon my soul, I do! This one, for instance. And this too."

"And this one?" she said eagerly.

"Yes," he answered. "And this one, hurrah! 'Twilight.' I know Bob thought a good deal of it."

"And this one?" she said anxiously.

"Yes, three cheers!" he replied. "'The Mill on Westleton Heath.' Scarcely hurt, by Jove! What a piece of good luck! But this one, damn it, is done for altogether. Not so sure, though. It will make a queer sort of mosaic. Still we'll have a try at it. We'll have a try at 'em all."

They were both kneeling on the floor now, deeply engaged in the difficult task of sorting out the separate pieces and fitting them together where they appeared to belong. Beaundesart had foraged about for paste and cardboard, and Mrs. Eriswell had found scissors, gummed paper and a sharp knife. It was a curious sight to see those two



They were both kneeling on the floor deeply engaged in the difficult task

people who had always been tacitly at variance with each other, now collaborating with quiet friendliness in an anxious attempt to retrieve the disaster over which they were both mourning. It said a good deal for Will Beaudesart that he, who knew the magnitude of the mischief, was able to suppress all signs of anger and indignation; and it said even more for Edith Eriswell that she, who had wrought the havoc, was able to rise above her humiliation and take her part earnestly in this pitiful labor. They did not speak about anything at first except the sketches and pictures, and then only a word or two as to the possibility or impossibility of saving this one or that. But when Will shook his head sorrowfully over some silvery little seascape, ruined beyond rescue, she closed her eyes as though ashamed to look, and said:

"Last night I felt that the only thing left for me to do was to kill myself."

"Well, that would not have been great of you," he said kindly.

"Great?" she questioned. "Do you expect commonplace people to do great things?"

"The funny part of it is that they generally do," he answered. "Unexpectedly, too. Why, it's always the commonplace people who lead forlorn hopes and do absurd deeds of heroism which no one knows of except themselves until long afterwards—perhaps not even then."

"Do they?" she asked with strange eagerness; and at that moment a noble thought was born in her brain.

"Yes," he answered, nodding. "I've always noticed it."

They went on with their work.

"And supposing you had committed suicide," Beaudesart said, after a time, "what good would you have got out of it, or Bob either?"

"Robert would have been free, at least," she said.

"No, he wouldn't," Beaudesart answered. "He would have been manacled tighter than ever—with 'mind forg'd manacles.'"

"And I should have been free," she continued slowly, after a pause.

"You would have been free," Beaudesart repeated half to himself.

"Yes," she answered.

"Do you want to be free too?" he asked with an eagerness which he could not conceal.

"Shall I tell you something?" she said. "You have not heard my side of the question. No one has heard my side of the question."

"No, by Jove," he replied, as though the idea had never occurred to him until now, at this moment.

"Well then, I am going to tell you that it hasn't been all honey and happiness for me," she said. "Anything but that, I can assure you. Oh, how I've been bored and bored with him—sometimes to extinction. If this is the price to be paid for living with a genius, then, in God's name, let me never set eyes on one again. He told me last night that a poet needs an atmosphere in which to breathe, and without it he perishes. And I tell you, Mr. Beaudesart, that a commonplace person also needs an atmosphere in which to breathe—yes, and freedom of spirit in which to be—to be comfortably commonplace."

She waited a moment, and then went on with increased earnestness:

"Last night I was stunned, wounded, humiliated by the things he had said to me in his despair, and by the cruel wrong I had done him in my despair. Yes, last night I could have killed myself in my misery and my shame. But now, to my own astonishment, as I speak to you, a feeling of intense relief begins to steal over me, and the sense of it becomes greater and greater as I realize that things have indeed come to a climax between us, and that there can be no question of our remaining together. No question. This means that he can take the freedom for which he longs, and I can take mine. Oh, the relief it will be! No longer any need to suppress my boredom. No longer any occasion to make even a feeble attempt to be different from my real self. And in addition, release from his sullenness, his irritability, his joylessness, his depression, his changing moods—signs of genius, I

suppose you'll call them. I don't know. What I know is, that I don't want them. They have tired me to death. But there is yet hope on the horizon, for both of us. There is still time for him to listen to his inner call and to rescue his birthright and safeguard his aspirations. And there is still time for me to recover my lost ground and enjoy the full exercise of my birthright. So each of us will be born again. And with all my heart, I say: 'Thank God for it!'

"Mrs. Eriswell, do you mean this?" Beaudesart asked excitedly.

"Mean it?" she cried. "I mean every word of it. I accept this way of escape with gratitude and joyfulness."

He came nearer to her, with a radiant smile on his kind face.

"Mrs. Eriswell," he said, "if you really mean all this, why, don't you see, it's the solution of the whole thing. Let us both go and tell old Bob at once."

"I have heard," said a voice slowly, and they turned towards the garden door and saw Robert Eriswell standing there.

He looked at the scene of desolation, at his sketches and studies, his unfulfilled fancies, his unsung songs, his unrecorded thoughts—at the unmistakable signs of attempted restoration, at Will, at her. No one moved. No one spoke.

It was Edith who first found the courage to break the terrible silence.

"What have you to say to me about my work of cruel destruction for which I am bitterly, bitterly sorry?" she said.

"I have only to say that I have deserved anything and everything for my words to you last night," Robert answered, "and that there is nothing to forgive."

For one brief instant her lip quivered and her heart hesitated, but she recalled those very words of which he spoke, words which she knew now had been prompted by no one except himself and which he had uttered in the despair of his soul, and she strengthened herself with the memory of Beaudesart's words about the great things done unexpectedly by the commonplace people and their absurd deeds of heroism known by no one except themselves. They had im-

planted in her mind a magic seed which had forced its way through the resisting soil and sprung into instant blossom and flower. She gathered herself together to make the sacrifice on which she had secretly resolved.

Very grand she looked, very beautiful, taking her eagle's flight which no one ever measured, doing her deed of heroism which no one ever knew.

She turned to her husband.

"We at least know where we both stand," she said in a voice which had no tremor in it. "You have heard just now what I think of our marriage. And I heard last night how I have come between you and all the ideals and ambitions you cherish most. We know now quite clearly that this is not a one-sided affair, but that we, each of us, in our own respective ways, yearn for freedom from each other. Let us therefore part in peace and without bitterness. Do you agree?"

The voice of the *Muse* whispered softly but insistently.

"Poète, prends ton luth, prends ton luth; c'est moi, ton immortelle!"

Robert heard the voice of the *Muse*, and his mind's eye saw a fair and lovely vision of her standing near him with outstretched arms, claiming him for her own. It faded, and another vision rose before him: a vision of himself, with a legend, in burning letters, of his mean spiritedness, his selfishness, his self-centeredness, his ingratitude.

"Edith," he cried in the agony of his soul, "give me another try—I implore you."

"Yes, yes, Mrs. Eriswell," said Beaudesart, "give old Bob another try."

She glanced quickly from her husband to Beaudesart.

"You say that to me, Mr. Beaudesart," she exclaimed, her lip quivering.

"Yes, yes, I say it with all my heart," he answered; and with bowed head he fled from the room.

Husband and wife were left alone together.

"Try me again, Robert," she said with an infinite tenderness.

The Burglar

BY ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

Author of "The Whiggin-Plipp," etc.

THERE were some things about the Fannings' built-by-the-contractor house that did not seem well planned, but these should not be blamed against the contractor; these things were the fault of the architect.

One of these things was the in-set casement window in the dining-room. The architect must have felt the full joy of creation as he planned that window, for it was a thing of beauty. It was just above the only spot where a sideboard would stand without closing one or more doors, and it was about seven feet long and two feet high, and it was placed in the wall just about high enough for a man not to reach if he stood on tip-toes. You know what casement windows are; they have hinges and swing in or out like a door, instead of sliding up and down in grooves, but this casement window was in-set, or out-set (whichever is the correct term). Viewed from the dining-room side, it was like a large cubby-hole with window frames at the back, for it was in-set (or out-set) about three feet. That was what made it so beautiful, for instead of having a "sill" like ordinary windows, or a window seat, like some others (for it would be rather inconvenient to climb up eight feet, over a loaded sideboard, to get into a window seat) this window had a copper bottom, like a large, copper, bread pan.

This was because the window was for flowers. You could put geraniums, or pansies, or—in fact, you could plant corn and potatoes in it if you wished. Mrs. Fanning had geraniums and ferns. She did not think potatoes and corn would be quite as artistic. Mrs. Fanning was perfectly delighted with the window.

It had one slight disadvantage, of

course. When summer came and the flies and mosquitos arrived by tens of trillions, as they do in Westcote, the wire screen man came at Mr. Fanning's orders and put wire screens at all the doors and windows and screened the porch, but when he reached the casement window, he sat down and held his head in his hand, and sighed. From time to time he would get up and look at the casement window from the inside, and then he would go out in the yard and look at it from the outside, and each time he grew more and more hopeless and depressed. There was no other window in the dining-room and it seemed as if the architect must have meant the casement window to open for ventilation, and close in case of storms, but the wire screen man was frightfully upset about it.

If he put the wire screens on the outside of the windows, that would end it. Nobody could ever open the casement window then, because the casements swung outward. So he gave that up. And if he put the wire screen just inside the casement, there would be no way in the world to open the casement except to get a step-ladder and take out all the potted geraniums and potted ferns, and then take out the screen. And in order to put the step-ladder near enough to stand on to reach the depths of the window, the sideboard would have to be moved out where the dining table was and the dining table would have to be up-ended so it could be moved into the hall to make room for the sideboard. Of course, this could be done, but it did not seem very convenient. The only other thing to do would be to put the screen flush with the dining-room wall, and that would be about the same thing. He did this, finally.

I only mention this to show what a lot of unnecessary worry a man will bring upon himself, for within three days after the screens were in place the usual damp Westcote summer weather began and the casement window swelled so tightly shut that Mr. Fanning could not have opened it with an ax. He tried a hatchet, and it only made dents in the window frames.

But there were two windows that did open and shut, early in the summer. They were in the parlor. They did not care to open and shut, and objected to it, but they could be pried open and hammered shut until the sixth of August. That was the day Mr. Fanning's two-week's vacation began, and he took Mrs. Fanning and the baby, and turned the Snuffle-sneeze (as they called their permanently hay-fevered maid) out to grass, and went to the Berkshires.

"There!" said Mr. Fanning when he had hammered the windows down, just before the family left. "There! Thank goodness I will not have to open *you* again for two weeks!" And then he slammed the front door from the outside and tried to lock it. But, as the key would not turn, he kicked the door open again and slammed it harder. At the tenth slam he was able to turn the key, and he locked the door. "There!" he said, "I rather think that will stay closed awhile."

The Fannings had a very pleasant two weeks in the Berkshires, and came home Sunday evening about six. Mr. Fanning was carrying the baby on one arm and a suit-case in the other hand, and Mrs. Fanning had a suit-case in one hand and a valise and eight cat-tails and a paper bag full of apples in the other when they mounted the porch, and Mr. Fanning set down the suit-case and reached into his pocket for the key and put the key in the key hole and turned it.

"Isn't it good to get back to our dear little home!" he said, and turned the door knob. Then he put the baby on the porch and turned the knob with both hands and pushed the door with his right hip. Then he kicked the door from the bottom up, as far as he could kick,

and jammed at it with his right shoulder.

"Can't you open the door?" asked Mrs. Fanning.

"Certainly!" said Mr. Fanning. "Oh, certainly! Of course, I can open it. At present I'm only brushing the dust off it."

Then he tried to kick it with both feet at once, which is a hard thing for any man to do.

Mr. Fanning made considerable noise, and before he had time to kick the door again the front door of Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp's house next door opened and Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp stuck her head out.

"Oh, it's you!" she said, as soon as she saw it was Mr. Fanning. "I didn't know but what it was that burglar come around to work by daylight so he would have better light. Goodness knows I'm glad you're home! Not a wink of sleep have I had these eight nights, with him a-poundin' and a-bangin'. I says to myself, just now, 'Well, of all the nerve! Him coming to burgle right in broad daylight!' That's what I said."

"Burglar?" said Mr. Fanning.

"Burglar I said and burglar I mean," said the Whiggin, folding her hands. "And of all the mean looking men he is the worst I ever did see. But I must say, Mr. Fanning, he's the sort of man that would make a success of a good business. Very different from the late Mr. Plipp. Very! A pretty time I'd have had gettin' Plipp to stick at a job the way that burglar has, and me knowing all the while it wasn't worth his time, if he did get inside, seeing all your silver is plated ware and the plate well worn off. But he had no way of knowing that, I dare say, poor fellow. Love's labor lost, I call it, but of all the resolute men!"

"Burglar!" repeated Mr. Fanning. "And you didn't call the police?"

"Call nothing!" said the Whiggin, turning up her nose. "Don't say police to me, Mr. Fanning. I know the policeman on this beat as well as you do, and far better, for he's a Plipp and my late husband's brother, and if there ever was a more worthless family married into I

don't know where or when. I'd as lief call a two-year-old kitten as call Oliver Wilgus Plipp when there was any danger about. If I was to tell O. W. Plipp there was a burglar on the street he would take it as a warning, more than as an appeal. No indeed! If I want burglars chased I go out and chase 'em; I don't call any living Plipp."

"But a burglar! A burglar trying to get into the house!" said Mr. Fanning.

"A burglar's only a burglar," said Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp calmly, "and it's all according to circumstances. Many's the night, when I've been sitting up for the late Plipp, when I'd have welcomed the company of a nice, quiet burglar. If you've got solid silver—which you aint got—you might say it was reasonable to be scared of a burglar; and if you're at home in bed and the kind of man that would get up and try to fight a burglar—which you aint—you might well wish no burglars around, but seeing as he couldn't get in, and you and your poor wife and child wasn't at home to be killed if he *did* get in, and nothing worth stealing in the house anyhow, I didn't see but that burglar was in a better place right here trying to pry up that window than going some place where he *could* get a window up, and folks *was* at home and there *was* something to steal."

"And you sat there in your house next door and let this burglar break into my house?" cried Mr. Fanning.

"Break nothing!" said the Whiggin-Plipp disdainfully. "I let him putter at that window and at this window, and that was all the good it did him. I know built-by-the-contractor houses from cellar to attic, and I own the first mortgage on yours, and well do I know that when windows in them has been shut two weeks, in August damp, saints and angels would have a hard time getting 'em open, let alone one burglar."

Mr. Fanning walked to one of the windows and examined it. The marks of the burglar's "jimmy" were not only apparent but obvious. Indeed, great slivers of the lower strip of the window frame had been pried off, and smaller bits lay,

below, like sawdust. The window looked as if a beaver had gnawed it, and as Mr. Fanning walked around the house he saw similar scrap heaps under each window. The Whiggin-Plipp walked from window to window with him.

"Fourteen nights is no time at all for a common burglar to open up one of these windows," she said, "once they get swelled down; not if he stuck to one window right along, let alone trying first this one and then that one."

"I think," said Mr. Fanning, "it would have been neighborly to have called some one to drive him away. If not a Plipp, you might have called a Whiggin. A Whiggin might at least have prevented the fellow from gnawing the windows like this. Why, they are almost ruined!"

"Humph!" said the Whiggin-Plipp. "They'll look a sight worse by the time you get them open."

Mr. Fanning opened the front door, but he had to borrow a chunk of stove wood from the Whiggin-Plipp to bang it open with. The inside of the house smelled exceedingly musty, and it was musty. On the backs of the books on the center table in the parlor the mould stood an eighth of an inch deep.

"Mercy!" said Mrs. Fanning. "Open the windows, George!"

Mr. Fanning put the baby on the floor and began opening windows. He turned the catches at the top first, and then braced his hands against the window sashes and pushed upwards. He might as well have tried to lift the great pyramid of Cheops with his finger-nails.

"Just a minute, dear," he said, and went to the cellar for his tool-box.

In the next hour he broke three chisels and the screw driver and pried deep gashes under every window on the first floor. Once he thought one of the windows moved a little, but he was mistaken.

"I'll stay home to-morrow," he said at length in disgust, "and take these windows out of their frames and plane them off. That's what they need."

"Do it!" said Mrs. Fanning. "We cannot live in this house in August with the windows closed. And I'll be glad to

have you at home, for if the Snuffle-sneeze comes back to-morrow I want you to discharge her on the spot. I told her, and told her positively, that she must be here in the house Sunday evening, and she isn't, and when I have a maid I expect her to obey me. I've never known it to fail. Give them an inch and they want a mile. Give them two full weeks' vacation, and they'll take an extra night every time. And I won't have it. Not from a wheezy, sneezy person like the Snuffle-sneeze, at any rate. She's got to go."

"All right!" said Mr. Fanning. "I'll fire her!"

The Fannings retired early that evening—before nine—for they were well tired out by their trip home. Mrs. Fanning did not fall asleep at once, for she was nervous about burglars, but Mr. Fanning dropped off like a log, and in half an hour Mrs. Fanning was asleep too. She awakened with a start.

"George!" she whispered in terror.

Mr. Fanning raised his head.

"Listen!" whispered Mrs. Fanning. "I hear that burglar!"

Mr. Fanning listened. He heard the noise, and it was very like a large rat gnawing at the floor. If it was the burglar he was working with a steady insistence. Not for a moment did he desist. Mr. Fanning slipped out of bed quietly and drew on his bath-robe. From his dresser drawer he took his revolver.

"Oh, George!" whispered Mrs. Fanning appealingly. "What are you going to do? Don't go down; he might kill you!"

"Look here!" whispered Mr. Fanning between his teeth. "I'm not going to do anything foolish. You be calm, will you? I'm going down to see that burglar open that window. I can't open it. If he can open it I want to see how he does it; that's all."

He slipped from the room and Mrs. Fanning slid to the floor and followed him. On the stairs she took his hand, and they stepped cautiously into the parlor. The burglar was working at the north window, and his burly form could be seen, by the light outside, crouched down

on the porch. He was working with the energy of a blacksmith and he had scattered about him as many tools as a plumber uses. As he worked, Mr. Fanning slipped nearer.

"Mary," he whispered, "go upstairs to bed. This is no place for you!"

Nor was it, for the burglar—who must have been a common fellow—was swearing in a perfectly dreadful manner. Mrs. Fanning caught but one of the oaths, and fled with her hands over her ears.

The burglar worked with the utmost recklessness, seemingly having long since thrown caution to the winds.

"I *will* open this window! I'll open *one* of them!" he kept saying, interspersing his words with oaths. "I can't open the windows, can't I?"

He left the window at which he had been working and went to the one on the side of the parlor toward the west. He hammered it with a piece of iron like a window weight, and pried at it, and swore, and when his voice had lost all pretence of careful modulation the Whiggin-Plipp's bedroom window just opposite opened and the Whiggin-Plipp put out her head.

"Look here, Burglar!" she called sharply. "You better get away from there. You're making such a racket I can't sleep. I stood your pottering around two weeks, but Mr. Fanning got home to-day, and that's a different thing. First thing you know you'll wake him up, and he'll begin shooting. There's nothing worth stealing in that house anyway. I've been through it often enough to know. Go some other place and burgle."

The burglar paused and wiped his forehead.

"That's all right, lady," he said gruffly but politely. "Sorry to disturb you, but it don't make no difference to me now, whether I make a haul in this house or not, and I don't care if I wake the whole neighborhood. I come out here two weeks ago, and I began on these windows, and I worked and worked—*You* don't think a burglar has any pride, maybe, but how'm I going to look myself in

the face if I let a lot of common windows like these beat me? I got to open 'em, lady; I *got* to open 'em!" His voice broke a little. "I aint rich and I can't afford all this time, but I set my mind on getting into this house through these windows, and I'm going to open 'em!"

"Well, all I can say," said the Whiggin-Plipp crossly, "is that you're as big a fool as Bill Plipp was, that I married, and if O. W. Plipp wasn't afraid of his shadder I'd have him take you up." She slammed down her window.

Mr. Fanning heard the clock strike. It was only ten o'clock and he was very, very sleepy. He turned away, and went upstairs, and got into bed.

"Has the burglar gone?" asked Mrs. Fanning.

"No," said Mr. Fanning. "But I can't wait until he gets the window open. He'll never get one open. He has no sense. He wont stick to one window, as a person should. First he tries one, and then he tries another. That's the way with these under classes—no real stamina."

He was disgusted. He had hoped the burglar could open at least one window, and now he felt the hope was vain. He fell asleep.

Sometime later—just how much later he did not know—he was awakened again by the clank of metal against metal, as if some one were throwing iron bars together angrily. Then he heard curses and the shuffling of feet and the slamming of the porch screen-door. The burglar was going!

"Beaten!" said Mr. Fanning with a sigh. "I've got to open those windows myself."

How long he slept he did not know, but he was next awakened by the crash of broken glass. He sat straight in bed, and Mrs. Fanning sat straight up beside him, her arms clasping him tightly. There was another crash and something bumped heavily on the dining-room floor below and broke.

"He's in!" whispered Mrs. Fanning. "He's in the dining-room!"

Mr. Fanning arose and softly closed the bedroom door, and locked it.

"Yes," he said, "he's in! But he got in like a sneak. *He* didn't open the parlor windows. He got in at the casement windows. *He* had to give up the parlor windows."

Another flower pot fell noisily upon the glass dishes on the sideboard and thence to the floor, where it shattered.

"Don't go down!" pleaded Mrs. Fanning. "Don't go down, George! Oh, please don't!"

"I'm not going down," said Mr. Fanning. "Let him steal if he wants to; he will not get much. I wont go down, but if I did I'd tell him what I think of him! Swearing he would open the parlor windows, and then sneaking in at the casement window!"

"I think it is wonderful—just wonderful—that he got the casement windows open," said Mrs. Fanning, between her chattering teeth.

"So do I—a miserable burglar like him!" said Mr. Fanning. "I couldn't open them."

"Listen!" said Mrs. Fanning. But no sound came from below. All was still. Mr. Fanning waited a full half-hour and not another sound disturbed him. Then he stepped from the bed and into his bath-robe and slipped on his slippers. Mrs. Fanning followed him down stairs, and at the bottom they stopped. Not a sound!

But, yes! As they stood they heard the sound of breathing, slow and deep, like that of a sleeping sea-cow. Mr. Fanning held his revolver before him and turned on the electrics. The dining-room floor was covered with broken glass and shattered flower pots. He looked upward. Humped together in the casement window alcove, just below the ceiling, the intruder slept.

It was the Snuffle-sneeze. She raised her head and looked at Mr. Fanning with blinking eyes.

"I clum in this window, Mr. Fanning," she said, "because it was the only one I could get open, and I can't get down."

Dear, faithful creature! She had kept her word. She had come home Sunday night!

An Adventure of The Scarlet Pimpernel

BY BARONESS ORCZY

Author of "The Scarlet Pimpernel," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERICK RICHARDSON

BIBOT was very sure of himself. There never was, there never had been, there never would be again another such patriotic citizen of the Republic as was *citoyen* Bibot of the Town Guard.

And because his patriotism was so well known among the members of the Committee of Public Safety, and his uncompromising hatred of the aristocrats so highly appreciated, *citoyen* Bibot had been given the most important military post within the City of Paris.

He was in command of the *Porte Montmartre*, which goes to prove how highly he was esteemed, for, believe me, more treachery had been going on inside and out of the *Porte Montmartre* than in any other quarter of Paris. The last commandant there, *citoyen* Ferney, was guillotined for having allowed a whole batch of aristocrats—traitors to the Republic all of them—to slip through the *Porte Montmartre*, and to find safety outside the walls of Paris. Ferney pleaded in his defense that these traitors had been spirited away from under his very nose by the devil's agency, for surely that meddling Englishman who spent his time in rescuing aristocrats—traitors all of them—from the clutches of *Madame Guillotine* must be either the devil himself, or at any rate, one of his most powerful agents.

"*Nom de Dieu!* Just think of his name! The Scarlet Pimpernel they call him—no one knows him by any other name! And he is preternaturally tall and strong and superhumanly cunning! And the power which he has of being transmuted into varied personalities—rendering himself quite unrecognizable

to the eyes of the most sharp-seeing patriot of France—must of a surety be a gift of Satan!"

But the Committee of Public Safety refused to listen to Ferney's explanations. The Scarlet Pimpernel was only an ordinary mortal—an exceedingly cunning and meddling personage, it is true, and endowed with a superfluity of wealth which enabled him to break the thin crust of patriotism that overlay the natural cupidity of many captains of the Town Guard—but still an ordinary man for all that! No true lover of the Republic should allow either superstitious terror or greed to interfere with the discharge of his duties—which at the *Porte Montmartre* consisted in detaining any and every person—aristocrat, foreigner or otherwise traitor to the Republic—who could not give a satisfactory reason for desiring to leave Paris. Having detained such persons, the patriot's next duty was to hand them over to the Committee of Public Safety who would then decide whether *Madame Guillotine* would have the last word over them or not.

And the guillotine did nearly always have the last word to say, unless the Scarlet Pimpernel interfered.

Thus it was that *citoyen* Bibot was appointed in command at the *Porte Montmartre*, and it was Marat himself who came on that third day of *Ventôse* in the year One of the Republic in order to have a final talk with Bibot and to impress upon him the necessity of keeping his eyes open, and to suspect all persons indiscriminately until they had proved themselves to be true patriots.

"Let no one slip through your fingers,

citoyen Bibot," admonished Marat with grim earnestness. "That accursed Englishman is cunning and resourceful and his impudence surpasses that of the devil himself."

"He'd better try some of his impudence on me!" commented Bibot with a sneer. "He'll soon find out that he no longer has a Ferney to deal with. Take it from me, citizen Marat, that if a batch of aristocrats escape out of Paris within the next few days, under the guidance of that d—d Englishman, they will have to find some other way than the Porte Montmartre."

"Well said, citizen!" commented Marat. "But be watchful to-night—to-night especially. The Scarlet Pimpernel is rampant in Paris just now."

"How so?"

"The *ci-devant* Duc and Duchesse de Montreux and the whole of their brood—sisters, brothers, two or three children, a priest and several servants—a round dozen in all, have been condemned to death. The guillotine for them to-morrow at daybreak! Would it could have been to-night!" added Marat, whilst a demonical leer contorted his face, which already exuded lust for blood from every pore. "Would it could have been to-night! But the guillotine has been busy—over four hundred executions to-day. The tumbrils are all full—the seats bespoken in advance—and still they come. But to-morrow morning at daybreak *Madame la Guillotine* will have a word to say to the whole of the Montreux crowd!"

"But they are in the Conciergerie Prison surely, citizen—out of the reach of that accursed Englishman."

"They are on their way, an' I mistake not, to the prison at this moment. I came straight on here after their condemnation, to which I listened with true joy. Ah, citizen Bibot, the blood of these hated aristocrats is good to behold when it drips from the blade of the guillotine! Have a care, *citoyen* Bibot; do not let the Montreux crowd escape!"

"Have no fear, *citoyen* Marat! But surely there is no danger! They have been tried and condemned! They are, as you say, even now on their way—well

guarded, I presume—to the Conciergerie Prison! To-morrow at daybreak, the guillotine! What is there to fear?"

"Well, well," said Marat with a slight tone of hesitation, "it is best, *citoyen* Bibot, to be over-careful these times."

Even whilst Marat spoke, his face, usually so cunning and so vengeful, had suddenly lost that look of devilish cruelty, which was almost superhuman in the excess of its infamy, and a grayish hue, suggestive of terror, had spread over the sunken cheeks. He clutched Bibot's arm, and leaning over the table he whispered in his ear:

"The Public Prosecutor had scarce finished his speech to-day; judgment was being pronounced; the spectators were expectant and still—only the Montreux woman and some of the females and children were blubbering and moaning—when suddenly it seemed as if from nowhere, a small piece of paper fluttered from out the assembly and alighted on the desk in front of the Public Prosecutor. He took the paper up and glanced at its contents. I saw that his cheeks had paled, and that his hand trembled as he handed the paper over to me."

"And what did that paper contain, *citoyen* Marat?" asked Bibot, also speaking in a whisper, for an access of superstitious terror was gripping him by the throat.

"Just the well-known, accursed device, *citoyen*, the small scarlet flower, drawn in red ink, and the few words, 'To-night—the innocent men and women now condemned by this infamous tribunal will be beyond your reach!'

"And no sign of a messenger?"

"None."

"And when did—"

"Hush!" said Marat peremptorily. "No more of that now. To your post, *citoyen*, and remember—all are suspect! Let none escape!"

The two men had been sitting outside a small tavern, opposite the Porte Montmartre, with a bottle of wine between them, their elbows resting on the grimy top of a rough wooden table. They had talked in whispers, for even the walls of the inn might have ears.



"He'd better try some of his impudence on me," commented Bibot

Opposite them the city wall—broken here by the great gate of Montmartre—loomed threateningly in the fast gathering dusk of this winter's afternoon. Men in ragged red shirts, their unkempt heads crowned with Phrygian caps adorned with tricolor cockades, lounged against the wall, or sat in groups on the top of piles of refuse that littered the street, with rough deal planks between them and greasy packs of cards in their grimy fingers. Guns and bayonets were propped against the wall. The gate itself had three means of egress: each of these was guarded by two men with fixed bayonets at their shoulders, but otherwise dressed like the others, in rags

—with bare legs that looked blue and numb in the cold—the *sans-culottes* of revolutionary Paris.

Bibot rose from his seat, nodding to Marat, and joined his men.

From afar, but gradually drawing nearer, came the sound of a ribald song, with chorus accompaniment, sung by throats obviously surfeited with liquor.

For a moment—as the sound approached—Bibot turned back once more to Marat.

"Am I to understand, citizen," he said, "that my orders are not to let anyone pass through these gates to-night?"

"No, no, citizen," replied Marat, "we dare not do that. There are a number

of good patriots in the city still. We cannot interfere with their liberty or—"

And the look of fear of the demagogue—himself afraid of the human whirlpool which he had let loose—stole into Marat's cruel, piercing eyes.

"No, no," he reiterated more emphatically, "we cannot disregard the passport issued by the Committee of Public Safety. But examine each passport carefully, citizen Bibot! If you have any reasonable ground for suspicion, detain the holder, and if you have not—"

The sound of singing was quite near now. With another wink and a final leer, Marat drew back under the shadow of the tavern, and Bibot swaggered up to the main entrance of the gate.

"*Qui va là?*" he thundered in stentorian tones as a group of some half-dozen people lurched towards him out of the gloom, still shouting hoarsely their ribald drinking song.

The foremost man in the group paused opposite citizen Bibot, and with arms akimbo, and legs planted well apart, tried to assume a rigidity of attitude which apparently was somewhat foreign to him at this moment.

"Good patriots, citizen," he said in a thick voice which he vainly tried to render steady.

"What do you want?" queried Bibot.

"To be allowed to go on our way, unmolested."

"What is your way?"

"Through the Porte Montmartre to the village of Barençy."

"What is your business there?"

This query, delivered in Bibot's most pompous manner, seemed vastly to amuse the rowdy crowd. He who was the spokesman turned to his friends and shouted hilariously:

"Hark at him, citizens! He asks what is our business. *Où?* citizen Bibot, since when have you become blind? A dolt you've always been, else you had not asked the question."

But Bibot, undeterred by the man's drunken insolence, retorted gruffly:

"Your business, I want to know."

"Bibot! my little Bibot!" cooed the bibulous orator now in dulcet tones,

"dost not know us, my good Bibot? Yet we all know thee, citizen; Captain Bibot of the Town Guard, eh, citizens! Three cheers for the citizen Captain!"

When the noisy shouts and cheers from a half-dozen hoarse throats had died down, Bibot without more ado turned to his own men at the gate.

"Drive these drunken louts away!" he commanded. "No one is allowed to loiter here."

Loud protest on the part of the hilarious crowd followed, then a slight scuffle with the bayonets of the Town Guard. Finally the spokesman, somewhat sobered, once more appealed to Bibot.

"Citizen Bibot, you must be blind not to know me and my mates! And let me tell you that you are doing yourself a deal of harm by interfering with the citizens of the Republic in the proper discharge of their duties, and by disregarding their rights of egress through this gate, a right confirmed by the passports signed by two members of the Committee of Public Safety."

He had spoken now fairly clearly and very pompously. Bibot, somewhat impressed and remembering Marat's admonitions, said more civilly:

"Tell me your business then, citizen, and show me your passports. If everything is in order you may go your way."

"But you know me, citizen Bibot?" queried the other.

"Yes, I know you—unofficially, citizen Durand."

"You know that I and the citizens here are the carriers for citizen Legrand, the market gardener of Barençy?"

"Yes, I know that," said Bibot guardedly, "unofficially."

"Then unofficially let me tell you, citizen, that unless we get to Barençy this evening, Paris will have to do without cabbages and potatoes to-morrow. So now you know that you are acting at your own risk and peril, citizen, by detaining us."

"Your passports, all of you," commanded Bibot.

He had just caught sight of Marat still sitting outside the tavern opposite, and was glad enough in this instance



"Tell me your business, then, and show me your passports"

to shelve his responsibility on to the shoulders of a prominent member of the Committee of Public Safety. There was general searching in ragged pockets for grimy papers with official seals attached thereon, and whilst Bibot ordered one of his men to take the six passports across the road to citizen Marat for his inspection, he himself by the last rays of the setting winter sun made close examination of the six men who desired to pass through the Porte Montmartre.

As the spokesman had averred, he—Bibot—knew every one of these men. They were the carriers to citizen Le-

grand, the Barenzy market gardener. Bibot knew every face. They passed with a load of fruit and vegetables in and out of Paris every day. There was really and absolutely no cause for suspicion, and when citizen Marat returned the six passports, pronouncing them to be genuine, and recognizing his own signature at the bottom of each, Bibot was at last satisfied and the six bibulus carriers were allowed to pass through the gate, which they did, arm in arm, singing a wild *carmagnole* and vociferously cheering as they emerged out in the open.

But Bibot passed an unsteady hand

over his brow. It was cold, yet he was in a perspiration. That sort of thing tells on a man's nerves. He rejoined Marat at the table outside the drinking booth, and ordered a fresh bottle of wine.

The sun had set now, and with the gathering dusk a damp mist descended on Montmartre. From the wall opposite, where the men sat playing cards, came occasional volleys of blasphemous oaths. Bibot was feeling much more like himself. He had half forgotten the incident of the six carriers, which had occurred nearly half an hour ago.

Two or three other people had in the meanwhile tried to pass through the gates, but Bibot had been suspicious and had detained them all.

Marat, having commended him for his zeal, took final leave of him. Just as the demagogue's slouchy, grimy figure was disappearing down a side street, there was a loud clatter of hoofs from that same direction, and the next moment a detachment of the mounted Town Guard, headed by an officer in uniform, galloped down the ill-paved street.

Even before the troopers had drawn rein, the officer had hailed Bibot.

"Citizen," he shouted—and his voice was breathless, for he had evidently ridden hard and fast—"this message to you from citizen Fouquier Tinville and citizen Danton. Six men are wanted by the Committee of Public Safety. They are disguised as carriers in the employ of a market gardener, and have passports for Barençy! The passports are stolen; the men are traitors—escaped aristocrats. Their spokesman is that d—d Englishman, the Scarlet Pimpernel!"

Bibot tried to speak; he tugged at the collar of his ragged shirt; an awful curse escaped him.

"Ten thousand devils!" he roared.

"On no account allow these people to go through," continued the officer. "Keep their passports. Detain them! Understand?"

Bibot was still gasping for breath, even whilst the officer, ordering a quick "Turn!" wheeled his horse round, ready to gallop away as fast as he had come.

"I am for the St. Denis gate; Grosjean is on guard there!" he shouted. "Same orders all round the city. No one to leave the gates! Understand?"

His troopers fell in. The next moment he would be gone, and those cursed aristocrats well in safety away.

"Citizen Captain!"

The hoarse shout at last contrived to escape Bibot's parched throat. As if involuntarily, the officer drew rein once more.

"What is it? Quick! I've no time. That confounded Englishman may be at the St. Denis gate even now!"

"Citizen Captain," gasped Bibot, his breath coming and going like that of a man fighting for his life. "Here! At this gate not half an hour ago—six men, carriers, market gardeners—I seemed to know their faces—"

"Yes! yes! market gardener's carriers," exclaimed the officer gleefully, "aristocrats all of them—and that d—d Scarlet Pimpernel. You've got them? You've detained them? Where are they? Speak, man, in the name of hell!"

"Gone!" gasped Bibot. His legs would no longer bear him. He fell backwards onto a heap of street *débris* and refuse, from which lowly vantage ground he contrived to give away the whole miserable tale.

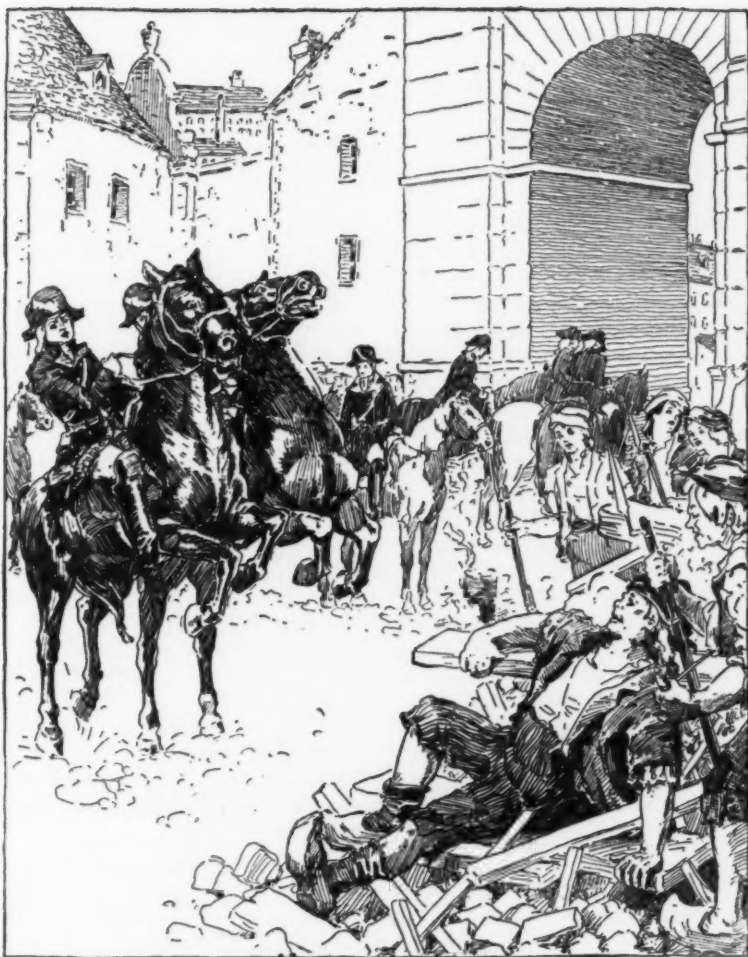
"Gone! Half an hour ago! Their passports were in order! I seemed to know their faces! Citizen Marat was here. He too—"

In a moment the officer had once more swung his horse round, so that the animal reared, with wild forefeet pawing the air, with champing of bit, and white foam scattered around.

"A thousand million curses!" he exclaimed. "Citizen Bibot, your head will pay for this treachery. Which way—"

A dozen hands were ready to point in the direction where the merry party of carriers had disappeared half an hour ago; a dozen tongues gave rapid, confused explanations.

"Into it, my men!" shouted the officer. "They were on foot! They can't have gone far. Remember the Republic has offered ten thousand francs for the capture of the Scarlet Pimpernel."



He fell backwards onto a heap of street *débris*

Already the heavy gates had been swung open, as the officer's voice once more rang out clear through a perfect thunder-clap of fast galloping hoofs.

"*Ventre à terre! Remember—ten thousand francs to him who first sights the Scarlet Pimpernel!*"

The thunder-clap died away in the distance; the dust of fourscore hoofs was merged in the fog and in the darkness; the voice of the captain was raised again through the mist-laden air. One shout—a shout of triumph—then silence once again.

Bibot had fainted on the heap of *débris*.

His comrades brought him wine to drink. He gradually revived. Hope came back to his heart; his nerves soon steadied themselves as the heady beverage filtrated through into his blood.

"Bah!" he ejaculated as he pulled himself together. "The troopers were well-mounted; the officer was enthusiastic; those carriers could not have walked very far. And in any case I am free from blame. *Citoyen Marat* himself was here and let them pass!"

A shudder of superstitious terror ran through him as he recollected the whole scene; for surely he knew all the faces of the six men who had gone through the gate. The devil indeed must have given the mysterious Englishman power to transmute himself and his gang wholly into the bodies of other people.

More than an hour went by. Bibot was quite himself again, bullying, commanding, detaining everybody now.

At that time there appeared to be a slight altercation going on, on the further side of the gate. Bibot thought it his duty to go and see what the noise was about. Some one wanting to get into Paris instead of out of it at this hour of the night was a strange occurrence.

Bibot heard his name spoken by a raucous voice. Accompanied by two of his men, he crossed the wide gates in order to see what was happening. One of the men held a lantern which he was swinging high over his head. Bibot saw standing there before him, arguing with the guard by the gate, the bibulous spokesman of the band of carriers.

He was explaining to the sentry that he had a message to deliver to the citizen commanding at the Porte Montmartre.

"It is a note," he said, "which an officer of the Mounted Guard gave me. He

and twenty troopers were galloping down the great North Road not far from Barenicy. When they overtook the six of us, they drew rein, and the officer gave me this note for citizen Bibot and fifty francs if I would deliver it to-night."

"Give me the note!" said Bibot calmly.

But his hand shook as he took the paper; his face was livid with fear and rage.

The paper had no writing on it, only the outline of a small scarlet flower done in red—the device of the cursed Englishman—the Scarlet Pimpernel.

"Which way did the officer of the twenty troopers go," he stammered, "after they gave you this note?"

"On the way to Calais," replied the other, "but they had magnificent horses, and didn't spare them either. They are twenty leagues away by now!"

All the blood in Bibot's body seemed to rush up to his head; a wild buzzing was in his ears. He gave a hoarse cry and fell back unconscious on the ground.

And that was how the Duc and Duchesse de Montreux with their servants and family escaped from Paris on that third day of Ventôse in the year One of the Republic.

The Grafter

BY ETHEL TRAIN

Author of "Son," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR BECHER

HULLO, Pat! How's yourself?"

Durgan, thus familiarly addressed, turned his head, using care not to disturb his position otherwise. It was a bright, bitter morning, with a blinding glare on the frost-covered windows of the shanty which served him as office and club during many hours of each day. Upon the top of the stove, in which a red-hot fire was burning, he had gingerly placed his heels, and was now sit-

ting in an attitude of extreme enjoyment, chair tilted backward, soles up.

"Pretty fair, Jimmy," he responded, the heartiness of his tone in using this qualified statement producing the effect on his hearer of superlatives.

Jimmy drew nearer the stove, limping painfully, and spread out his hands to the warmth.

There was in the aspect of those thin fingers with their cruelly swollen joints

something that caused a queer catch in Durgan's throat as he asked casually:

"How's the rheumatism?"

For answer Jimmy looked at him and grinned. In that grin lay the whole history of their relations.

"We know, don't we?" it said. "So what's the good o' bluffin'?"

"What's bringin' you out to-day?" Durgan continued crossly. "You've no more sense than a baby. Let me get hold of Mary, that's all!"

The old man puffed out his sunken cheeks, and cocked his head roguishly. "Mary don't know," he said. "I got tired sittin' home doin' nothin', so I jist slipped out."

At this juncture the door rattled, and with a gust of wind there burst into the room a little old woman, a shawl tightly wrapped about her head.

"I've got him, Mary!" called out the big voice of Durgan with its welcoming note. "I'm keepin' him for you!"

Mary's excited protest died upon her lips; she contented herself with a reproving look at her husband, such as one bestows upon a naughty child.

"Come along wid me," she commanded.

"Sure, he will!" agreed Durgan. "He was just goin'." Getting up, he began to wind Jimmy's muffler about his neck, his great hands moving tenderly as a woman's. He towered head and shoulders above the recipient of his ministrations, who received them as a matter of course, chin thrust out.

"Now, Jimmy," he said, giving the old man's back a final pat, and facing him toward the door, "you go back home and don't come out till the first *thaw*, see?"

"If he gives you any more trouble, Mary," was his final word, "jest you come to *me*."

The door had closed behind the couple when Durgan, remembering something, sprang to it and bellowed after them:

"Don't forget to call for his pay, Wednesday, Mary!"

He listened in the cold until he heard her shrill response, and then came back into the room with a quizzical look.

"*Ferget* it!" he thought. "Not them! But it sort o' heartens 'em to hear of it, anyway."

Before resuming his seat he pondered a moment, gravely.

"Jimmy'll never work again, I'm thinkin'!" he concluded with a sigh. "He looks awful bad."

Presently his sharp ears caught a disquieting sound, the unmistakable wail of a little child, penetrating faintly through closed apertures.

"That wont do," he muttered, his whole body alert until he heard the stamp of heavy feet on his doorstep. Opening, it admitted a uniformed officer of the law, holding by the hand an atom of humanity who continued loudly to voice her grievance against the world.

"I can't stop her," said the policeman helplessly. "It's so far to the station-house, I thought I'd just bring her in here."

"Station-house, nothin'!" growled Durgan, dropping to his knees before the little girl and peering anxiously into her face. "She's half froze to death." And cradling one of the tiny purple hands in his palm he began to chafe the numb fingers with a pressure that would not have damaged a rose-leaf.

"Take the other one, Tom," he ordered. "Go easy."

The two big men, one on each side of the baby, bent in deep absorption over their task and, as the pain grew less, her genuine sobbing subsided into that long note of tearless complaint resorted to on occasion by even the best behaved of infants as a matter of pride. Durgan, accustomed to all varieties of disingenuousness, had caught the transition.

"That's better," he said with satisfaction. "All right, Tom. L'ave her to me."

When delinquent Family arrived ten minutes later in the person of a terrified little brother, the baby was sitting on Durgan's knee delightedly eating a banana.

Durgan eyed the small boy in perplexity. How vent upon so pitiful a guardian the wrath to which the little one's plight had aroused him?

"Please, mister," the little boy began, lapsing into stolidity at the sight of his sister enthroned in comfort, "would you leave me have Katie back again?"

Durgan frowned. "You're a pretty one to take care of her," he said. "How did you lose her?"

The boy, frightened by his tone, cowered. "I was—I was just playin' ball a minute," he said, in the manner of a criminal entering a plea of guilty.

Durgan, setting the baby down, went over and put his hands on the boy's shoulders.

"Playin' ball is all right," he said. "Nothin' to be ashamed of. But when you want to do it, sonny, just leave the kid home."

The boy's eyes filled.

"Ma's busy," he said, "and Dad's lost his job. He's drunk most all the time. I meant to mind Katie."

"What's your Dad do?" Durgan asked quickly.

"Works on the roads—sometimes."

"What's his name?"

"Dick Hoolihan."

"And yours?"

"Tim."

"Is he drunk this morning?" Durgan pursued.

"Yes—this mornin' he is," replied the boy.

"Well, Tim," said Durgan, "you see that he aint drunk to-morrow. Understand? If he aint, tell him to come to me in the mornin'. I'll find him somethin' to do."

There was a pause, the boy surprised, yet sharply comprehending.

"Where do you live?" asked Durgan at length.

The boy jerked his thumb vaguely backward.

"Is it far?" asked Durgan, adding, "I don't know you."

"Naw, 't aint far," the boy replied.

"We only moved in last week."

"Oh, that's it!" Durgan said, enlightened. "Mind you take her *right home*, now!"

"I will," the boy promised, and Durgan knew that he would keep his word.

Durgan paced the floor meditatively.

His list of laborers, comprising the maimed, the halt and the blind, had not, up to this time, embraced the drunk and disorderly. "*Somebody's* got to take care of Katie!" he reflected with a smile, and dismissed the subject from his mind.

For fully five minutes he remained undisturbed. Then he heard a too familiar sound of slipping horses, to the accompaniment of futile shoutings that attempted to urge them on.

The driver, cold and discouraged, did not respond to the cheerful sight of Durgan, standing interestedly on the threshold of his open door, but he dismissed the idea of using the butt-end of his whip, and confined himself to hoarse threatenings.

The big white mares were almost hidden by clouds of steam; it was all to no purpose that they were straining their hearts out of their bodies; the wagon did not move.

Durgan stepped out and examined the bags into which their great feet were tied.

"They're all wore out," he said. "Stop yer yellin', Ned, like a good feller. Don't you see they *wanter*, but they *can't*? Screamin' never did a horse no good."

Pretending not to see the driver's sulky look, since he was now silent, Durgan made a trumpet of his hands and bellowed. His assistant, Mike Grady, was the first man to come running up. Others followed, springing from nowhere, their breath curling up in front of them like the smoke of pipes. Durgan and a dozen more put their shoulders to the back of the wagon, giving it a mighty push; it started and rolled off amid their cheers; the driver nodded, looking back, and Durgan made for the shanty, realizing that he was without hat or coat.

"Ye can sour on a feller fer bein' bad," he said to Grady, who had followed him, "but blamed if I know what to do with one that's just a dom fool."

Grady laughed.

"Put him through a course av sprouts, Pat," he suggested, "and thin, whin he's got the sack from his boss for bein' a blockhead, *you* kin take him on. There's

always room for wan more in *our* outfit."

Durgan held out his red hands to the stove, and shook his head.

"It's got to stop somewhere," he said. "They aint goin' to keep on dolin' me out the tin forever, and no questions asked!"

Grady assumed a wise expression.

"An' you so savin'!" he protested. "You've never asked 'em for a thing since you was appointed."

Just then there was a loud knock. In response to Durgan's "Come in," there entered the room a fresh-faced youth to whose vitality the bitter weather seemed but to have served as an additional stimulant.

"Am I addressing Mr. Durgan, Foreman of Highways?" he asked eagerly, in an unmodulated voice.

"Harrigan, that's me," Durgan replied. "Pray be seated." He waved his hand largely toward a chair, and his gravity belied the twinkle in his eye. He could command a grand manner when he chose.

"I'm a promoter," continued the visitor artlessly, sitting down.

"Then you're in the wrong place," explained Durgan. "They don't allow me to do any buyin'. It's the Borough President you want."

"That's right," cried the youth, "but I don't quite know how to reach him. I thought I might gain his ear through you."

"Bless the lad!" was Durgan's inward comment. "He talks as if I was Prime Minister to the Czar of all the Rooshas. What's yer line?" he asked.

The young man, drawing an envelope from his pocket and removing the elastic that bound it, deftly extracted several blue-prints and looked about anxiously for a suitable place in which to display them.

"The table, Grady," ordered Durgan. "Bring over the table fer the gentleman."

His tone showed the exact shade of deference calculated to win the regard of a new fresh-water-college graduate.

"Don't disturb yourself on my ac-

count," the latter addressed Grady, springing up and placing a hand lightly under one end of the small table that was to be moved. Then he spread out his blue-prints carefully, after which he sat down again and looked up over his shoulder at Durgan, who was puffing at his pipe and bending to examine the photographs.

"These are designs," said the promoter, clearing his throat hopefully, "of portable stone-crushers. We believe that they cannot fail to meet a very practical need. The invention is not yet on the market, but our customers are placing their orders now. If Mr. Allen would be interested—"

Durgan laid a hand on the boy's arm.

"Take it from me," he said confidentially, "Mr. Allen's got old fashioned ideas. He don't hold with machinery at all. Now if it was *me* that was Borough President—" His tone was faintly indicative of unimaginable wonders.

"Doesn't believe in *machinery*?" The young man stared in amazement. How was that possible?

"If I could only *see* him, Mr. Durgan," he said, "I believe I could convince him in five minutes. Is there any way of my obtaining an interview?"

Durgan shook his head solemnly. "He's that peculiar," he declared. "You can't move him at all when it comes to machinery. He don't want to hear the word. Hand tools is good enough for *him*, sez he."

"Then I needn't trespass any further on your time," said the visitor, his voice full of disappointment. "Thank you, Mr. Durgan, just the same. I wish you a very good-morning."

When they had bowed him out Durgan murmured, "Nice boy," meditatively.

"Wants schoolin', though," he added. "Did ye see how hard he took it, givin' a lift to that table? And him been to college! Thought we'd orter appreciate that."

"Pat," said Grady. "You do take the cake fer lyin'."

Durgan received this compliment modestly.

"I don't lie for nothin', though," he said. "Machinery, is it? And what would my old boys be doin' this winter if we had machines?"

His blue eyes lost their bright, knowing look, and stared, softened, through a gathering film of tears.

For he saw them coming, his old boys, hobbling pitifully along the icy streets, their hollow chests pitted against the force of rough winds, still with something to live for—something to do. He heard the feeble sound of their rock-breaking—a few of them working, while the rest stood by with implements in their poor, wasted hands—

He, Durgan, had his own methods, and he would not scruple to use them in dealing with anyone who advocated machines. He threw out his chest, dashed the moisture from his eyes, and said in his ordinary tone:

"Git out the time-sheet, Mike."

When the big roll had been produced, he directed further, "Mike, a new entry."

"Only *wan* this mornin'?" asked his assistant, poised his pen.

"Hoolihan, Richard," dictated Pat, ignoring the sarcasm. "Laborer. Put him down for January thirty-first."

"Yep. Richard Hoolihan. Right?"

Durgan nodded. "Father of Katie," he said under his breath. "Katie and Tim."

Once again the door opened, this time to admit a young girl. She was bare-headed, the shawl she wore having slipped down onto her shoulders, where it hung in soft folds. Her hair was strained back unbecomingly, but it disclosed the fine, clean shape of her head; her skin was transparent, and the red blood showed through in her cheeks. As she entered, her big, luminous eyes fixed themselves on Durgan in mute appeal; she was saved speech—he knew why she had come.

"Yer Dad, Lotty?" he said, hardly above a whisper.

Lotty nodded. Her fingers, coarsened by work, twisted themselves together nervously; two tears rolled down her cheeks.

"When?"

"An hour ago. Mother wanted you should know it right off, so I just ran over. I can't stop."

Speech halted between the men when she had gone. Finally Grady said:

"Too bad. Holtorf was a good feller fer sure. Who'd 'a' thought a touch o' cold 'd 'a' ended like this?"

Durgan did not reply at once. When he did, it was to ask:

"Goin' out to lunch?"

"Sure I am. You comin'?"

"I guess I wont to-day. Don't feel hungry. I'll wait fer you here."

When Mike had gone Durgan threw himself into his chair and remained motionless, lost in thought. It was the one hour of the day free from interruption. His work, which he thoroughly enjoyed, and the consciousness of which was always present with him, slipped from his mind utterly. He, the least introspective of men, was projected backward twenty years, and living over in these painful seconds the one early and bitter disappointment of his life. How vividly it came back to him—that sorrowful morning, when he had gone out from the presence of a girl with the same delicate skin, the same luminous eyes as the one who had visited him just now, carrying with him the burden of knowing that she was not for him. It was Eric Holtorf, the grocer, whom she loved. She had tried to tell it to him so kindly, had Jess! He had never forgotten that. And in his heart he admitted that she had chosen the better man. He had whistled as he had walked away, and had resolved to banish the subject from his mind.

When Jess had married, Pat was the liveliest guest at the wedding, and through the long years that followed, he was the staunchest and most valued friend of both man and wife. Never had he forgotten them at Christmas, and many a trinket of his giving had delighted the soul of Lotty as she was growing up. This was easy for Durgan, as he had no family ties.

He had been twenty, then. Lotty must be fifteen now!

Poor painstaking, honest Holtorf! He



"Mother wanted you should know it right off"

had never been able to make the grocery business pay. Still, he had nursed it along somehow until two years ago, when Durgan had found a man who was willing to take it over. Quietly, with a sigh of relief, Holtorf had agreed to sell out, and had then honorably used every cent of the money thus obtained to pay off his long accumulated debts.

He had been enrolled among Durgan's road workers as a matter of course, and had put into his new occupation all his remaining energies. But all his life he had hovered over a counter, and this barren, wind-swept existence of the boulevards was distasteful to him. He had had an illness last winter, and at the end of it had refused, in spite of all that Durgan could say, to accept any pay for his twenty days of idleness.

This year things had gone better. That is, until the cold snap, which had begun last week. It had knocked the breath out of Holtorf. He had remained at home, for he was not a man foolishly to

take chances, but his cold had not improved. Durgan had shared to some extent in the anxiety of Jess and Lotty, but he was too optimistic at all times to take any other than a hopeful view.

He had never believed that this would be the end—not until he had seen Lotty's face. He could read faces. What was to be done now? Alert as always, when he was concerned with practical affairs, he dismissed sentiment and bent his mind to this problem.

He had a busy afternoon, and attended to a mass of work with his usual practical cheerfulness. But, "What's to be done about Jess and Lotty?" was the ever recurring question underneath it all.

He did not see them that night. Even his thoughts he kept shyly away from that place of mourning. Jess knew that he knew; he could let it go at that.

It was several days later that Grady said to him carelessly one morning:

"How about crossin' Holtorf's name off the time sheet? It aint been done."

Receiving no answer, Mike looked at Durgan questioningly. The latter's eyes were fixed on him with an expression quite inscrutable.

"You needn't be in any hurry about it," he said quietly.

"Oh!" was Grady's succinct rejoinder. And Holtorf's name remained. Not that Durgan felt happy about it. His easy conscience would not be lulled to sleep this time. On the contrary, it was giving him a lot of unlooked for trouble.

How many times before had names that had no right there been left on that misleading sheet? He could think of a dozen of them now, ready to stare at him should he take the trouble to look over the pages, as he had often done without turning a hair.

But Holtorf's was different. It was not so much that he was dead as that he had been so honest. Durgan could see him now—his thin cheeks, with their serious lines of care and worry, his eyes that everyone trusted. He felt as though he were doing Holtorf some harm, desecrating his memory by some coarseness. He winced at the thought.

Yet how else support the widow and the fatherless?

Durgan never had any money of his own; his salary dripped away monthly almost before it had been paid. He gave of his own freely—of his own and of others'. Who so well as he knew of the thousand needs that were crying to heaven for it?

Poor old Holtorf was dead. Jess and Lotty were living. He saw no other way.

"I can't let 'em starve!" he groaned, and paid the money, week in, week out. He could think of countless plausible reasons to urge upon Jess, and she hung on his every word. "She might 'a' married me just as well!" he often thought, with a curious gleam of resentment in his heart, not that she had chosen as she did, but that, her choice made, she had failed of loyalty to motives she was unable to appreciate. Durgan did not appreciate them himself; his own standard of action was satisfactory to *him*. But with a large tolerance he sympathized

with other people's idiosyncrasies and would not have resented their recoiling in horror from methods that he used habitually. His own and Holtorf's had been opposite as the poles, yet the two had been warm and fast friends.

The ice was breaking up, and the fire in the office stove had grown perceptibly smaller when Grady, coming in one Monday morning said, abruptly:

"Heard about the investigation?"

Now Durgan, who liked taking his ease on occasion, had spent the whole of the preceding forenoon in bed, and the rest of the day had been occupied in looking up cases of destitution that he had been too busy to run to earth during the week, so for once he had neglected the reading of his Sunday paper.

He shook his head, smiling good-naturedly.

"Who is it now?" he asked with a yawn.

"Look here, Pat," remonstrated Grady. "It's serious this time. It's *you*."

Pat sat up and knocked the ashes from his pipe, with three little taps against the stove.

"Let me see," he said, reaching out for the sheet that Grady held in his hand.

The detached interest of his tone gave his subordinate pause. Mike was less subtle than his chief, who, his head on one side, was now engaged in inspecting the glaring headlines.

IMPORTANT DISCLOSURES IMMINENT!

Grand Jury before disbanding to look into certain methods of building highways in vogue in this Borough.

Rumors Long Current To Be Given Attention.

"Bah!" said Durgan disgustedly, breaking off. "Phwat does it mean? Why don't they talk English?"

"They don't know enough yet," answered Grady. "You've got ter put 'em wise."

At that moment they heard the shuffling of feet outside, and the youth who presently entered to serve Durgan with a subpoena was met in a manner so nonchalant and easy, that his reception gave

him food for thought during all the hours that it took to make his rounds with the rest of the package of yellow papers.

"Guess *he* aint got much to worry over," was the conclusion he reached. "It's just to make a stir for the papers that he's bein' lugged in."

That night at his club in the back-room of Hanley's saloon, Durgan learned through his friends, who had been working all day to get information, that a certain promoter for a company who manufactured portable stone-crushers, lately come to New York, was a college friend of the brother of a young assistant district attorney named Reid.

"Oho!" exclaimed Pat. "Me young friend must 'a' got that hearin' with the Borough President he was in such trouble about, an' found I'd been drawin' on me imagination. So him an' Reid's been puttin' their heads together, to get a line on what I was doin'."

He looked from one to another of the friendly faces about him, and remarked:

"He didn't need as much schoolin' as I thought, that lad! The joke's on me."

In his official shanty two days later, Pat was alone and going over in his mind yesterday's events. On the whole he believed he had acquitted himself well before the Grand Jury. He had been instructed to bring the time sheet, and had given it over cheerfully into the white, nervous hands of the young assistant district attorney, who had spent much frowning thought over its pages. Pat had listened politely to the warning that he need not answer any question that might tend to degrade or incriminate him, and had then replied to all with a right good will. Hennessey—whose name appeared here—was he working? Why, Hennessey couldn't work, had been laid up with a broken leg for weeks! And Jimmy O'Brien? He'd never work again, his rheumatism was so bad!

So it had gone on and on, while Durgan had patiently explained the disabilities of his *corps* to the attentive Grand Jurors.

Finally Mr. Reid, after an impressive pause, had asked in a low, vibrating voice:

"How about Eric Holtorf?"

Pat's open and innocent demeanor had deserted him at that; he had hesitated and shrunk.

The assistant district attorney, watching him narrowly, had seen in this change of front perfect confirmation of his suspicions.

"Have you nothing to tell us in regard to your relations with this man?" he had pursued, with an insistent note in his voice.

Drawing himself together, Pat had divested his face of all expression—wiped it clean, like a slate.

"No, sorr," he had answered.

The district attorney had looked about him significantly, but Pat had missed the look. Behind his mask his heart was thumping painfully; his one thought was to shield from the curious the memory of his friend.

"They'll never know from *me*, Eric, old man, how I come to meddle with you," was his fervent unuttered promise. "No need o' draggin' you into all this."

"Is this name," the district attorney had gone on, following up his advantage, "in your handwriting?"

Here was a question that Pat could answer.

"No, sorr," he had replied promptly.

"*Not* in your handwriting?" Mr. Reid had continued with sharpness.

"No, sorr," Pat had repeated; "I didn't write it! It's my assistant, Grady, that keeps the books."

Feeling that he had gained nothing by the digression, Donald Reid had gone back to the main subject. Pat had been adamant. To the district attorney's triumphant delight he had refused absolutely to answer any questions regarding the matter of Eric Holtorf.

In thinking it all over now, Durgan felt that they must have divined his reasons at least in part, those kindly Grand Jurors who had taken such pains to listen to all that he had had to say earlier in the session. Name after name came back to him, story after story of

want and misery that he had told them in his own words as well as he could.

"I guess they caught on," he thought hopefully. "Any wan o' them 'u'd 'a' done just the same if it had been up to them."

Relieved, he got up and went over to the desk to look through his mail. Just then a shadow darkened the window and fell across the envelope he was holding. He glanced up quickly, and caught a glimpse of two broad shoulders, a glint of buttons, as his friend Tom O'Shaughnessy, the officer who had shared in his responsibilities toward little Katie Hoolihan, marched by with the slow, measured step of a sentry on duty.

In those heavy footfalls there was something wearily depressing even to the unanalytical Durgan. So when Tom's bulk filled the doorway his "hello!" sounded less hearty than usual.

"What's the matter?" he cried in the next instant—Tom's look at him was so strange, his manner so disconcerting. Tom's answer came with difficulty.

"Pat," was all he could bring out at first.

"Go on, man!" Durgan encouraged him. "Out wid it, whatever it is!"

Tom's chest began to heave.

"This is the hardest day's work av me life, Pat," he said.

Durgan did not reply, but stood looking at his friend.

Then the big policeman came over and laid a hand on his shoulder. It was the touch he was wont to put upon the arms of lost boys whom he purposed taking back to their mothers.

"I've got to arrest yez, Pat," he murmured.

The moment the words were said, Durgan was all bluff cheerfulness.

"Is that what you're makin' such a time about?" he smiled. "Ycu had me thinkin' you was down on me fer somethin'!"

Tom bristled at that. "You're a nice wan!" he growled.

It was Durgan who took the policeman by the arm, and not the policeman Durgan.

"Come on," said the latter, "an' don't take on. We're goin' together!"

Then they marched off to the police-station, shoulder to shoulder, keeping step.

A week later Durgan was indicted by the Grand Jury for forgeries upon the time sheets.

The district attorney having placed the case in the hands of his assistant, Donald Reid, for preparation and trial, invited Pat, who was out on bail, to call at his office.

It was at an unpropitious moment that Durgan came. The district attorney had had a trying week. He was tired from pressure of business closely followed by social engagements, and his spirits felt gray like the weather. There had been a succession of days just like this, with the strong yet joyless light of the overcast winter morning coming in through his windows—the sun seemed to have withdrawn itself for good. This monotony was getting on his nerves.

Durgan, who was not in the least affected by the atmosphere, entering, came up to the chief's desk.

The district attorney inspected him with great thoroughness, from head to foot. A slight wrinkling at the corners of the mouth showed that what he saw did not please him. So did he sometimes look at dinner when he had tasted of a dish and found it wanting.

Pat's great, coarse frame, his shrewd eyes, his skin roughened by exposure, all jarred on the district attorney.

Prejudice against this man had already been created in his mind by his assistant; Durgan's unconsciously self-confident way of standing, served only to deepen the unfavorable impression he had made on entering the room. Yet it was important that he should be conciliated.

"Good-afternoon, Durgan," began the district attorney.

"Good-afternoon, sorr," said Durgan.

"I've sent for you to give ycu a chance to tell me the truth," the chief went on.

"Yes, sorr," said Durgan, wondering.

"Of course," continued the district



"Plaze, sir," she said, "we've come to ask yer Honor not to be harrd on Pat Durgan"

attorney, "I know you want to be loyal to the men that got you your job—it is quite natural that you should—but there's no need of carrying your loyalty to the point where *you've* got to begin to suffer for what somebody else has done."

He paused, and it was evident to Durgan that he was waiting for an answer. But Pat, for once, had no answer to make. He only looked his bewilderment.

"I *know* you haven't done this for yourself," the chief continued.

"Done what, sorr?" asked Durgan.

"Why, committed these forgeries!" said the district attorney.

Pat's eyes flashed.

"Forgeries, is it?" he asked wrathfully. "Who's called me a forger? I never put another man's name to paper in me life."

"No, no, certainly not," the chief tried to soothe him. "It's only the technical name for it."

"I don't understand them things, sorr," said Pat, still ruffled.

"I don't believe you do, Durgan," replied the chief. "You're the victim of a system. You're being used to screen some one higher up."

Pat listened to this thoughtfully. Then his face cleared. Light was beginning to break upon him.

"Yer Honor," he said bluntly, "you've brought me here to turn informer. Aint that it?"

The district attorney flushed.

"If you choose to put it that way," he said coldly.

"No offense, sorr," rejoined Pat quickly. "Ye must excuse plain speakin' from a plain man."

He waited a moment, then looking the chief full in the eyes, said quietly:

"I aint one to tell on a friend."

An uncomfortable pause followed, and then Durgan, who felt sorry to have been the cause of it, exclaimed: "Yer Honor, ye've been misinformed. I'll set the whole thing right in two minutes!"

"Good!" cried the district attorney, sharply attentive.

"I've no one to screen," explained Pat.

"It's meself that's done whatever's done. Meself, an' no one else."

"I'd best tell him about Eric," he thought, "there's no other way o' makin' him understand."

"This is how it is, sorr," he resumed patiently. "Holtorf was a friend o' mine—"

He found it difficult to go on.

"Whatever your obligation to this man," began the district attorney, misunderstanding his silence.

"No obligation, sorr," was Pat's quick rejoinder. "I was under no obligation to poor Eric, at all."

In the softening of his voice at the last words there was something that made the chief glance up.

The Irishman, catching the look as a boy catches a ball, and, flinging it back, went on eagerly:

"Eric 'u'd 'a' been the first to blame me for doin' as I done."

"Did he leave a widow?" the district attorney inquired, and was angry with himself for asking.

"He did, sorr," Pat replied. "Herself an' Lotty, the little girl."

The delicate shadings of this burly fellow's voice were unexpected and disconcerting.

"How old?"

"Sixteen, sorr—just sixteen— As pretty a girl, sorr," Pat continued confidentially, "as ever yer Honor set eyes on. An' good, too!"

"Well, Durgan," said the district attorney, "I'm afraid that has nothing to do with it. I'll go over your case again, but as you say you were acting on your own responsibility, it's a pretty serious outlook for you. I'm sorry."

"That's all right, sorr, thank you kindly," responded Pat, and went out.

The chief's suspicions did not recur to him, and the newspapers remained silent. The public waited, expectant for disclosures against men "higher up," but were unaccountably disappointed.

On the afternoon of the day before the Wednesday set for the trial, the district attorney was alone in his office when there was a knock at the door.

"Come in," said the chief.

A court attendant entered, grinning.

"Witnesses to see you, sir, in the case of the People against Patrick Durgan."

"For the defendant?"

"For the defendant, yes, sir."

"I'll see them," said the district attorney, "if there are only one or two."

"There's two *dozen!*" came the answer.

The district attorney was amused in spite of himself.

"Show them in," he ordered.

For what followed, he was totally unprepared. As it began to enter his doorway, that slow procession, amusement died on his face, curiosity taking its place, followed in quick succession by interest, deep attention, and finally complete absorption.

Stiffly they came hobbling in, Durgan's old boys—not one missing save Jimmy O'Brien, whose place was faithfully taken by Mary, his wife. Trembling arms supported her; frail hands pushed her forward. There she stood, and did not know how to begin.

"Plaze, sir," she said, finally, in her brave, thin, little voice, "we've come to ask yer Honor not to be harrrd on Pat Durgan."

Tears rushed to the district attorney's eyes. He wished to reply, but his voice failed him. Once before something had gripped him like this. He had gone with his little daughter to kindergarten, and she had begun to sing, with other babies, seated on tiny chairs placed in a circle—they had all sung in the smallest of voices. What was there in this ragged company to suggest those sheltered, befrilled little ones? Yet the tightening of his heart had been precisely the same then as now.

Still they were coming, limping painfully, some with hands cracked and cold, others holding up flaring handkerchiefs to red noses, all bedraggled, underfed and palpably unfit for the mission they had undertaken.

They were all in now, doubtful of where to stand or what manners to adopt in the august presence, until the district attorney, leaning forward and stretching

out his hands toward them over the desk said simply:

"Now tell me all about it!"

They needed no second invitation, but came up close, thronging about him like sparrows tempted by the sight of bread crumbs.

"I'd 'a' been carried off be pneumonia last year if Pat hadn't brought me the medicine," vociferated one.

"An' my boy'd 'a' been out o' work all winter if Pat hadn't 'a' kep' his place open when he broke his ankle," cried another.

"An' it's all av us 'u'd 'a' starved if he hadn't fought off the machines," said a third.

"What machines?" interposed the district attorney.

The old man looked puzzled.

"We don't rightly know what machines," spoke up one of them. "We've crushed the stones so many years be hand."

"An' hard work it is, too," piped up another cracked voice.

"It's all the saints be praised we've got Pat!" quavered many together.

The district attorney, listening to them heart and soul, tried to remind himself—"This Pat of theirs is a criminal! He has misappropriated State funds! He has—"

Quaintly in biblical language his thought finished itself out—"He has strengthened the weak hands and confirmed the feeble knees!"

His eyes fell on one old man who was standing quite still, in the group, but not of it.

"That's Daddy Maloney," some one volunteered.

"What's Durgan done for *you*?" asked the district attorney.

The old man shook his head vaguely, putting his hand to his ear. Though the building had been blown up by dynamite he could not have heard, but would have gone under with that look on his face. Thoughts he must have—communings with himself in the hermetically sealed fortress of his mind—but of what nature no one could guess. No one, that is, but Durgan. Durgan must somehow

have penetrated into that fastness, since it was on his behalf that Daddy Maloney was here!

One by one they told their stories. Each had his chance and was corroborated by the others. At the end they all began to chatter like magpies, without order or hope of order.

The chief made no attempt to stem the tide. Against his judgment, his reason and his conscience he was going the way they went, drifting with the flood.

Pat passed a sleepless night, the first of his life. In the morning he choked over his breakfast, and when his case was called he was seized with a trembling of the knees so sudden and so terrible that it seemed he would never get to the bar. The well filled court-room he saw as a sea of faces, wavering up and down in an indefinite, blurred line. If he could only have made out features!

"All the boys is here," he said to himself desperately, "an' Tom and Mike said they'd git close as they could."

There they were indeed, but of what avail, across those infinite distances?

He had never thought it would be as bad as this. Truth to tell he had never believed it would *get* to this. He who had been a king in his own district, had found it impossible to visualize beforehand the scene in which he was now taking part.

"Has the prisoner counsel?" he heard.

The sharp and definite question brought his senses back out of the maze in which they were groping. Besides, he was sitting down now, and that was better. Queer that he, Pat Durgan, should experience so great a feeling of relief on sitting down at a bar of justice!

He wondered what was going to happen now. He had no lawyer! He who counted his friends by the score, had no one to speak for him. He was all alone, and at his hour of most urgent need.

"I never thought it 'u'd get so far," was his dull, inward repetition. "I'd orter got a lawyer, but I couldn't see the day comin'."

When the Court assigned counsel—a

little, restless man—Pat's sensation of misery became acute. The ways of courts were utterly beyond his comprehension. Everybody had always known him! He had known everybody!

"He looks to be a good little feller," admitted poor Pat of his lawyer, unwilling to withhold from anyone his due, "but he's never laid eyes on me till this minute. I'm done fer."

Donald Reid was waiting in ill-concealed impatience to open his case. He had a growing reputation as a prosecutor, and had shown great zeal in the cause of reform. He hoped to make this a record. Of his feelings, Pat, who could now see clearly, guessed something from his expression.

"He's no need to be in such a hurry," he thought. "He's got me right enough."

At this point a little flutter of excitement ran along the benches. Pat felt it, and turning, saw the district attorney coming in.

"I didn't know the boss bothered about little cases like mine," was his bitter reflection.

He watched the chief beckon his assistant, and hold with him a whispered consultation.

"He's goin' ter try me himself!" he thought in amazement. "The young feller don't like that."

The blood mounted to Pat's head; he felt quite giddy again. But with his surprise was mingled satisfaction of a sort. "I'd sooner be tried be *him* than *him*," he concluded, looking from the district attorney to his assistant.

To what the chief was saying, Reid now appeared to give a reluctant consent.

"'T aint me at all," flashed upon Pat's mind. "He's takin' this time to speak to the Judge about somethin' else."

Glad of the respite, Pat scarcely listened to the district attorney's opening words.

"May it please your Honor," the latter began.

A hush of expectation fell; everyone was tense, except Pat.

"I appear before you this morning,"



Durgan's old men

the district attorney resumed, his voice, though not loud, penetrating the farthest corners, "on a somewhat unusual mission. The crime of which this defendant is accused is a serious one."

Pat started and turned white. His heart beat so loud that he could scarcely hear.

"It is a fact," the district attorney went on, "that he has caused to be continued upon a pay roll the name of Eric Holtorf—a dead man. I am here not to condone his crime, but to put before you if I can, his motive in committing it. Many of us are proud of our actions. How many of us put our motives to the test? Acts speak for themselves; motives are locked away safe from analysis. We seldom judge our own!"

"Were any of us on trial here to-day for the secret springs of any given action, could he meet the ordeal fearlessly?"

Stillness held the court. The Judge on the bench, the prisoner at the bar, the crowd and the jurors—all sat without moving so much as a finger.

"This man," the district attorney resumed, "in using the public money as he saw fit, seems to have regarded himself as an agent of the State. However mistaken, his belief was sincere—"

"Mr. District Attorney," said the Judge, "I am not clear as to what the defendant's purpose was."

"If your Honor will bear with me for a moment," the district attorney answered, "I think I can make that plain to you. There are in this room many witnesses as to his motive. May I ask them to rise?"

The Judge bowed.

It took a little time for them to get to their feet—Durgan's old men—disabled and crippled in one way or another as they were—but at last, amid much creaking of shoe leather and jogging of elbows it was accomplished, and they stood solemnly, with dim eyes toward the Judge.

Pat, turning again, saw them, and could hardly control his excitement.

"I told Doherty not to come," he said under his breath, "an' him that bad with

lumbago! It'll put him back a week. Oh, but it's glad I am that he's here!"

"Your Honor," the district attorney concluded, motioning them to sit down, "I think there is no doubt now as to the defendant's purpose in using State money as he did. *Not one cent* of it ever went into his own pocket. It went to Jimmy O'Brien, and to Daddy Maloney, and to others of their like. Durgan devotes his life to them; his days are filled with their business. It is accident that has made him a criminal! Were he a rich man, we should honor him as a philanthropist, for he would then have no temptation to use for the amelioration of their lot other means than his own private ones. Let me lay further emphasis on the fact that whereas Durgan's act was reprehensible, his intent in committing that act was not criminal. It is my firm belief that should his case go to the jury, no jury would convict him. I therefore move that the defendant be discharged on his own recognition."

The district attorney sat down, and all eyes fixed themselves on the Judge.

"Mr. District Attorney," said the latter, "you have ably pleaded the cause of this defendant. While such a request from a prosecutor is not unprecedented, it is of very rare occurrence. But, as I agree with you that there are circumstances in this case which would make it unlikely that a conviction could be obtained, I shall dismiss it as you desire."

A cheer arose in the court room, suppressed as soon as started.

"It's all nonsense!" thought Donald Reid hotly. "I had a perfectly good case."

"Ye can go," said an officer in Pat's ear. "Ye can go, an' a good job too."

Pat arose, gripped the rail with both hands, and stammered out his thanks.

He was immediately surrounded by his friends, who had been waiting to pour out upon him a chorus of congratulations.

"Come back here a minute!" said the Judge.

Pat sprang forward, put at ease by the unofficial tone and manner.

"Phwat can I do fer yer Honor?"

"Spend this—as my agent," the Judge answered, handing him a twenty-dollar bill.

Pat's eyes glistened. He was well-nigh bereft of speech. "Thank ye kindly, yer Honor," he managed to say.

"I'd like to start a fund," said the Judge, raising his voice, "to be placed at Durgan's disposal. Anyone wish to contribute?"

A dozen voices answered; change clinked; bills rattled.

Donald Reid felt in his pockets. "I'd better go for my check-book," he muttered.

When he came back, Pat was trying to shake down a whole hatful of coins and notes, his face reflecting his heartfelt gratitude.

"It's yours absolutely, Durgan," the Judge said, "to use at your discretion. When you need more, come to me and I'll see what I can do."

Durgan waited; he felt instinctively that the Judge had more to say.

"Your guess is right," said the latter gravely. "There's just one thing more. No public money from this day on; private contributions only."

His hands still on the rail, Durgan's eyes, eloquent of all he could not say, turned from the Judge to the district attorney who sat beside him on the bench.

"It's you that saved me!" his heart cried out. "It's you that spoke fer me!"

From this man he was willing to take both law and gospel. Yet the district attorney gave him no word of reproof, exacted of him no promise.

"Good luck, Durgan," was all he said.

"God bless you, sorr," answered Pat.

"I wonder whether he'll do it again?" the Judge queried.

"Never!" said the district attorney. It was he who was making the promise, his glance on the door.

Durgan was just going out, an arm about the shoulder of Daddy Maloney, while little Tim Hoolihan clung proudly to his other hand.

Mamie's White Feather

BY FLORENCE WOOLSTON

MAMIE WEEKS never let her duties at Allen's notion counter interfere with her social life. She handed needles, pins, hooks and eyes to the dressmaker's apprentice and continued her conversation with the girls:

"Yes, it was a grand show he took me to. And who do you guess I seen? Violet Mulligan! And she was fixed to can the public, believe me, girls. Honest, she was slim enough to fall through a piece of macaroni, and say, her skirt was so tight she couldn't take a full step. Her feller had to haul her up to the gallery. And her hat!"

Mamie rolled her eyes expressively, but seeing a floor-walker approaching she bent forward and solicitously addressed her customer for the first time.

"No, ma'am, we don't carry no Canton flannel in the summer. It wouldn't be at this counter anyway." Then, the danger of interruption past, she began her monologue anew, with the preface, *sotto voce*:

"It was that there gray spats she was with. Wouldn't he jolt you! As I was sayin', you'd ought to have seen Violet's hat. Us three could have stood under it easy. And she had a willer plume like a kangaroo's tail. I bet it was two-and-a-half long."

"Violet always had class, but to my mind she extra done it."

Carrie Foster patted her massive array of puff and coronet lovingly. Her hair cost so much that she was obliged to economize on dress. "Clothes is all right but it's hair that counts," she added. "The more you can show, the more style you get. Anybody that wears their own hair aint much, believe me."

"Violet said," chimed in Anna Jenkins, "she wasn't ever going to take a job again where the management forced her to wear a black dress. She wants to look different from other folks."

"She does all right. She's got gall

enough to mark her anywhere." There was a note of jealousy in Mamie's voice, for Violet, in her new position was able to dress in a way that far outshone her former companions—a chiffon gown, with skirt hobbled to make necessary a Chinese gait, satin pumps with heels three inches high, a hat as big as a parasol and a streaming willow plume. On Fifth Avenue, Fourteenth Street, at Coney Island, the moving picture shows and even in the store, Mamie had seen hundreds of such costumes, and it was her heart's desire to be similarly arrayed.

"What would a plume like Violet's cost?" Anna was half-ashamed to reveal her ignorance.

"Like hers? You couldn't touch one for less than fifteen dollars. It was genuine hand-knotted. Say, I'm goin' to have one on my winter hat. Just a plain black velvet with one big white willer and diamond pins."

"Swell," commented Carrie. "So simple and refined! Say Mame, I can put you wise to a bargain in feathers. I seen an ad. in the *La Toilette*." Carrie extracted a small purse from her stocking and waved a clipping which announced:

Ladies' Own Feathers Made Up—
\$3.00. Tips to Order—\$5.00. Apply M.
Dominecho, 628 East 108th Street.

Mamie copied the address and with characteristic promptness decided to have an ice-cream supper down town and order a feather on the way home. She had not expected to buy one before December but this unforeseen bargain was quite within reach as already there was \$5.00 in the empty candy-box, labeled "Lid." Seven willow plumes waved tantalizingly from the hats of passengers on the Third Avenue car and Mamie counted them with the proud consciousness that soon a similar long, fluffy, white one would be in her possession.

"It's clothes that does it," mused

Mamie. "The commonest, kind looks swell when they're carryin' the goods. You can't go nowhere without clothes—not even to church. And a feller aint goin' to take a girl out if she aint got class. Leastways, not a feller like Leonidas Smith. Last night he was flashin' his lamps at Violet Mulligan. The sooner I get classy the better."

At 108th Street, she left the car and walked toward the river, eyeing the crowds of jabbering foreigners with patronizing disdain as she picked her way gingerly along the littered side-walks. Mamie did not appreciate local color and so did not enjoy Little Italy with its gilded Madonnas, wailing concertinas and breath of garlic. The dilapidated frame tenements, waiting only a brisk fire or a building boom to consign them to rubbish, looked all alike, and number 628 was last in the row. Some one told her that Mrs. Dominecho lived on the top floor.

The stairs were so dark that Mamie could scarcely find the landings, but she continued to stumble and climb until she saw a sky-light which marked the roof. At the end of the hall a stingy flame of gas lighted a sign:

Willow Plumes.

As she knocked there ensued a sound of animated voices and scuffling feet, and an Italian woman peered out, asking eagerly:

"You wanta plume? Willow plume? Come in, *Signorina*."

As Mamie entered the kitchen she perceived a table, under the gloomy court windows, laden with innumerable bits of feather, weighted by bricks. Two little girls, dark-eyed and solemn, were tying small pieces to make longer strands, and Mamie became conscious that under their skillful fingers, a willow plume was in process of making.

Mrs. Dominecho offered a chair but Mamie declined with a gesture.

"I can't stop," she said. "Show me a feather that's done."

"Mariana," commanded her hostess, "bringa to me biga plume."

The older of the children slipped from her chair and after a moment's

groping under the bed, drew out a long, black feather. Mamie shook her head.

"Not for muh! I want white. Is white more?"

"Nota so much money costa the white—she maka more easy. Black is five-fifty—white fiva dollar."

"Can I have it Sat'day?"

Mrs. Dominecho shrugged her shoulders.

"Me sorry but 'til Saturday isa de black for 'nother lady. I gif you Tuesday?"

"I guess I aint got no choice. All right. Tuesday sure, and say, don't let them kids get it dirty."

Her errand done, Mamie hurried across the city, eager to reach home with the news of her bargain. As she opened the door, Gladys, her little sister, with saucer-blue eyes and red hair crimped so tight that it stuck around her head like an aureole, came bounding out, shrieking:

"My gum—Mamie—did you bring my chewin'-gum?"

Mamie looked penitent. "Say darlin', I clean forgot. Give Mamie a smack and to-morrow she'll bring it, sure."

She threw her bag on the table, took off her hat and sank wearily into a chair. Gladys stood beside her, murmuring, "My gum—you promised." When the sobs increased in quick crescendo, Mamie rose.

"Quit bawlin', kid; don't feel so bad. I'll get it 'cross the street."

Mamie returned presently with a package of gum, and when they were all generously supplied and Gladys happily engaged in pulling long strings of pepsin, she proceeded to recount the adventures of her shopping expedition.

Mrs. Weeks, a tawdry and aggressive person who, obviously, had seen better days, listened with many exclamations of interest.

"I think you done just right, Mamie," she declared. "It takes a hat to get a hat. If you dress like a lady when you aint got the price, you're more likely to find a man that can dress you that way permanent. I never known it to fail. The dowdy stays dowdy."

"I felt like a mope, last night," confessed Mamie. "Beside Violet Mulligan I looked like that there chromo of Adam and Eve in Steiner's winder. And Leonidas was blinkin' his lights at her. I'd hate to be cut out by a Bowery goil and Violet aint no principles when there's a man around to hand out the dough."

When Mamie repeated the story of her "bargain" at the store, next morning, Carrie Foster advised her to complete the extravagance by a new dress, remarking frankly that such a plume should cert'nly be accompanied by a suitable costume. Mamie considered the counsel sound and the result was an investment of her week's wages in a polka-dotted silk gown with kimono sleeves, and an untrimmed hat, large enough to carry the feather safely. Leonidas, having invited her to a roof-garden for the following Wednesday, she decided to startle him with an outfit, equal if not superior to Violet Mulligan's.

On Tuesday she could hardly wait for closing time and throughout the afternoon served the never-ending stream of customers with her eyes constantly on the clock and her thoughts unremittingly on her plume. When the hands pointed to six, she hastily donned her hat, hidden under the counter to facilitate departure, and without stopping for supper, made her way up town.

It seemed an eternity to her impatient spirit before she finally knocked at Mrs. Dominecho's door. There was no reply. The unusual quiet was oppressive and Mamie felt a curious thumping of her heart as she knocked again, more imperatively. Presently Mrs. Dominecho opened the door, reluctantly.

"Me no maka finish de plume dis day," she began with a nervous, apologetic smile. "Me Mariana maka de sickness and me Marietta no can tie alone. Saturday I gifa you sure."

Mamie's face clouded. She peered into the kitchen, thinking that perhaps this was only an excuse. Marietta was standing by the bed in which Mariana lay, her tiny claw-like fingers clutching the ragged quilt and her eyes staring somberly at the ceiling.

With a gasp Mamie pushed her way in and looked down at the child, amazed. She had never before seen such marks of suffering in so young a face.

"That's the sickest kid I ever seen. What's she got?" she asked.

Mrs. Dominecho lifted her hands as if in appeal to Heaven. "Me no can tella. It much hot now and she musta maka de plume— Maybe work? Maybe weather?" She pointed to Mamie's feather on which were only a handful of knotted flues. "So far my Mariana tie and then she maka de sickness."

Mamie glanced at the scraggy skeleton which bore only a promise of willowy ends. Beside it were tiny bits of white feather, ready for the knotting. She felt suddenly weary at the thought of such tedious tying, and understood, for the first time, the meaning of the term "genuine hand knotted" which she had used so glibly. She looked again at Mariana and a wave of sympathy swept over her as she pictured the frail little girl, laboriously tying three and four knots for every strand of feather.

"Aint it fierce!" she exclaimed. Then, blankly she gasped: "My Gawd! And it was my feather she was doin' when she was took."

Mamie turned away. She could not bear longer to look at Mariana.

Mrs. Dominecho, mistaking pity for anger, renewed her apologies.

"Nexta week I make sure. My Marietta and me—we tie."

Mamie eyed her curiously. "Don't talk to me about next week. You don't know what you'll be doin', then. This kid's sick—awful sick."

For Mamie, who assiduously cultivated indifference to emotion, was strangely touched by Mariana's haunting eyes and look of utter helplessness. In an impulse of generosity she opened her bag, took out the long-hoarded \$5.00, laid it on the table, and said quickly, as though she feared she might change her mind as suddenly as she had made it:

"Take that. Get a doctor and some medicine. And buy her something to eat—not Dago garlic but good United States food."

Mrs. Dominecho looked at the money and hesitated. "You gooda kind lady. Nexta week I gif you plume sure—"

Mamie waved her aside. "Not for muh! Not on your life. I couldn't wear no weepin' willer after seein' that there. I'd feel like I'd yanked it off a kid's hearse."

She turned abruptly, trying to hide her disappointment, and when her eye fell upon the unfinished plume, she was overwhelmed with a sense of her own loss. The dress—the hat—Leonidas—the roof-garden—Violet Mulligan—her heart sank and she made a brave effort to swallow the choking lump in her throat.

Mrs. Dominecho started forward, a torrent of thanks and endearing phrases upon her lips.

"O *Signorina*, you are *simpatica*. When I am dead I will not forget your kind heart." She seized Mamie's hand and kissed it passionately.

Mamie drew back, embarrassed.

"Kindly omit flowers," she said brusquely, and started for the stairs. She found it difficult to see in the dimness.

There was a bargain sale at Allen's, the next day, and it was noon before Carrie found an opportunity to ask:

"Did you get your plume, Mame? I'm crazy to see it."

Mamie nonchalantly patted her puffs and adjusted the maline bow at her throat. "The plume? Oh, I was talkin' of gettin' one at a bargain. Well, there aint no such thing as a bargain, believe me, girls. I was to the place and there was nix doin'. Anyway I changed my mind. I'm all for coronation styles and I hear that Queen Mary's a mope on classy dress—no hobbles and big hats. Besides," she added with a drawl as she saw her arch-enemy, and Violet's gentleman friend, approaching, "I hear that willers are goin' out—they're dreadful common. Only *passées* and such as Violet Mulligan wear 'em now."

A Case of Concussion

BY MELVILLE CHATER

Author of "In Wrong," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY SANFORD TOUSEY

HUMANS have been trying to explain this love business ever since Eve said "Apples!" Now, we don't mean love à la Bradstreet, or friendship ripened into love, or time-exposure love, or any such watery *placebo* as the little winged doctor sometimes palms off instead of the burning elixir itself. No: we mean the old, original, instantaneous, *veni-vidi-vici* love of the R. & J. brand classicized by Shakespeare and popularized by every 12-second courtship on the moving-picture screens. It has been ridiculed, flayed, parodied, cursed, even denied—everything but explained. The best that psychologists can do is to call it mean names such as "psychic emotive

obsession" and "episodic symptoms of hereditary degeneracy." If concussion be defined as the act of shaking or agitating, especially by the impulse of another body, why not call the Thing "concussion?" But, we repeat, it cannot be explained; it must be experienced: and to tush-tushers at the present clinic we reply that the case dissected here is not impossible but merely inexplicable.

Rufus Vankinck lived on that avenue of asphalted ease whose name confers a distinction on the ordinal number, Fifth. That is to say, he was there for a month or so of each year—usually to be seen gazing world-wearily out of the windows of the Solid Mahogany Club, as it

is not called—when he was not yachting, motoring, polo-playing or attending to life's serious business such as going abroad for his clothes. Well, youth must have its fling—but now we are speaking not of Mr. Vankinck, who was thirty-eight, but of the solid squares of young women, from *débutantes* to *divorcées*, who for twenty years had been flinging themselves at Mr. Vankinck's head. Unavailingly? Even so! With the most bewitching of Circes and under the most moonlit-conservatory circumstances, he remained as self-possessed as a fire-cracker with a wet fuse, as indifferent as an obelisk wreathed with roses. He was no mere woman-hater—which at bottom means volcano—but a cool, impersonal, supercilious woman-snubber; and his own sister declared that she could no more imagine his falling in love than she could the Pyramids doing the can-can.

Four or five zigzag miles away from the Vankinck residence runs the Broadway of the lower East Side—Delancey Street—in which neighborhood, within distance of the Elevated's cheerful, homey roar, there lived a tall, lean, bashful, biceppy youth known as "Young" O'Keefe—which name set him apart forever from all other O'Keefes, whether middle-aged, elderly or senile, whose profession steered a compromise between the Horton Boxing Law and the Marquis of Queensbury Rules. O'Keefe was a frequent guest at receptions and smokers—the kind that are held in back lofts and empty car-barns at 2 A. M., with a lookout on the street-corner; and he belonged to a dozen organizations the names of which changed regularly once a month but always sounded like "The Owls' Sportin' Club" or "The Gem Atherletic Association." What's in a name, anyway, so long as the winner gets two-thirds, and your bail and fine are guaranteed in advance?

One summer night Young O'Keefe had attended a moonlight glide, and a raven-haired siren had got in under his guard and smitten him on the cardiac plexus. Yes, just like that. It was the old fashioned, concussive cinemato-

graphic thing itself. Right then and there the R. & J. brand was put on him, and it was Rosie Rafferty who done—who did it. Rosie was the bewitching product of two ancient, antipathic races—Irish and Hebrew; and the sons of men, quite innocent of anticipating Rostand's hen-pheasant, declared that she was certainly "some squab." The sensation one received from gazing on her dazzling beauty was something like putting your face very close to an electric fan. Miss Rafferty worked in a West Side department store, whose trade-slogan was "Rest by the Waterfall!" and when she was not busy laying gloves across the knuckles of young men who always forgot their sizes as soon as they looked into her eyes, she was leaning statuesquely against a column, toying at her barrette, with profile askance, pinching her finger-tips to make them taper, or exchanging murmured confidences with Miss Elise Dogan—stationery department, to your right—to the old, old burden of: "An' I says to him—An' he says to me—An' then I says—An' then he says—" *ad. lib.*

Miss Rafferty was engaged to Young O'Keefe; that is to say, she had told him not to bother her. Now, the ways of plighting oneself are many and strange, yet they will remain unvaryingly oblique so long as feminine is spelled with an f. Ladies in high life may say "I didn't dream you felt *that* way," or, "Can't you *really* get along without me?" and even break the compact afterwards; but when one of their lowlier sisters, curled inside your arm on the dark deck of a Coney Island boat—with the band playing the "Dream Kiss Waltz," and the moon rising, and the oil refineries smelling so homelike across the waters—when thus, I say, she lays her head on your shoulder and sighs, "Aw, don't bother me!" it's the laws of the Medes and Persians to an Essex Street shyster's brief that she regards herself as irrevocably pledged, and that you will do well to talk business with the installment-plan jeweler on your block.

The fates of Young O'Keefe, Miss Rafferty and Rufus Vankinck were sud-



"Who—who are you?" he muttered thickly, gazing upward in dull amazement



She and the gentleman rolled up Fifth Avenue together

denly hyphenated by a brick. Even millionaires must have their little unwonted luxuries, and one noontide Mr. Van-kinck went afoot down Fifth Avenue and explored the western environs of Washington Square, to see how the other half lived. While passing by the operations of a house-wrecking squad, he interfered with the fall of the aforesaid brick—which for forty years had been waiting patiently overhead for that fateful moment—and was stretched flat. For a moment there he lay with a sand-bagged, paralyzed sensation; then he sat up in a misty and reeling world to find that its center of gravity was irrevocably fixed in a pair of beautiful brown eyes that were aureoled by a huge, black picture-hat and a set of imitation seal-skins.

"Who—who are you?" he muttered thickly, gazing upward in dull amazement.

"A lady that seen you drop," replied the Ideal Center of Gravity. "My, but your hat's broke in!"

He closed his eyes as if dazzled, then reopened them. No, she had not van-

ished like the hasheesh-smoker's unearthly dream; she was still there before him, as real as Miss Diana of Madison Square.

"But it's—it's *you*!" he murmured helplessly. "Oh, it's you! You!"

"Yes, it's me," admitted the Revelation, helping him to his feet. "I see you aint quite right in your head yet, and no wonder, after such a wallop. I'd sue them fellows if I was you, honest I would."

"But who *are* you?" he asked with wondering eyes. "Your name, your name!"

"Not much!" responded the Vision determinedly. "I refuse to be rung in as a witness." Then the idea of a reward occurred to her, and she smiled starrily. "There, I don't mind letting you in on it. My name's Miss Rafferty. And yours?"

"My name is— My name is— Look!" He said it stupidly, then drew out a flat pocket-book and handed it to Rosie. From the high denomination of the bills contained therein she thought that the gentleman must certainly be on his way

to the savings bank; then she found an engraved card which told her that he who had forgotten his name was none other than Rufus Vankinck of Six hundred and something, Fifth Avenue.

"Don't go!" pleaded Mr. Vankinck. He added in a thick, wandering voice, "Telephone—chauffeur—home, side by side."

Miss Rafferty hailed a seedy, piratical-looking hack wherein she and the gentleman rolled up Fifth Avenue together. She was surprised to find that a millionaire's way of holding one's hand was just the same as any other man's. Now, Rosie, being a humble shop-girl and an avid reader of the society columns, knew more about the Vankinck family than their own set did. She could have told you exactly where Mr. Vankinck had spent the past summer, and all about his sister's divorce from Lord Elphinstone, and just what Mrs. Vankinck had worn at the horse-show, last week. Therefore when the hack anchored in front of the Vankinck residence and two animated statues in black-and-yellow waistcoats helped their master out, she felt no more than an agreeable familiarity with greatness, like the man who is able to say, "I went to school with a boy whose aunt's brother-in-law was an intimate friend of President-Lincoln;" and she drove away picturing Rufus lying in the white-and-gold ballroom—the photograph of which she had seen—with his feet on the sofa, surrounded by the Vankinck art-treasures—about which she had read—the work of Michael Angelo, the famous Irish-Italian.

A few days later Rosie, perusing the beauty-hints column of a Sunday newspaper, encountered this advertisement:

If the lady who assisted a gentleman on Waverly Place, last Thursday afternoon, will communicate with R. V., at the address to which they afterwards drove, he will be deeply indebted.

Rosie communicated. After a series of negotiations wherein R. V. proposed a motor-ride in the park, and Miss Rafferty limited him to a ten-minute conversation on the corner of Sixth Avenue

and Fourteenth Street, they met by appointment in Washington Square, and Rufus Vankinck asked her to marry him. Miss Rafferty opened her eyes at the ingenuousness of such tactics.

"I'm glad to have been of service to you," she said, "and if you're anxious to reciprocate, I got a kid-brother that you could help to a good job. But you'll oblige me by cutting out *that* kind of talk. 'Tisn't reely proper for me to be seen walking with you, you know."

But Mr. Vankinck insisted. He had quite recovered his memory and speech, and though, to be sure, there was rather a queer, dazed look in his eyes, that is the most ancient and honorable sign of being madly in love. He insisted that Miss Rafferty was all that a goddess walking on earth should be; with glowing eloquence he burned away the barriers of class-distinction; he babbled of wayside-chapel espousals and Adriatic day-dreams *à deux*.

"But," said Miss Rafferty simply, "my folks wouldn't get on with your folks maybe. You know, they're not much for show."

Nevertheless, after a period of torrid wooing, weak Eve consented, stipulating, however, that she'd have to speak to somebody first.

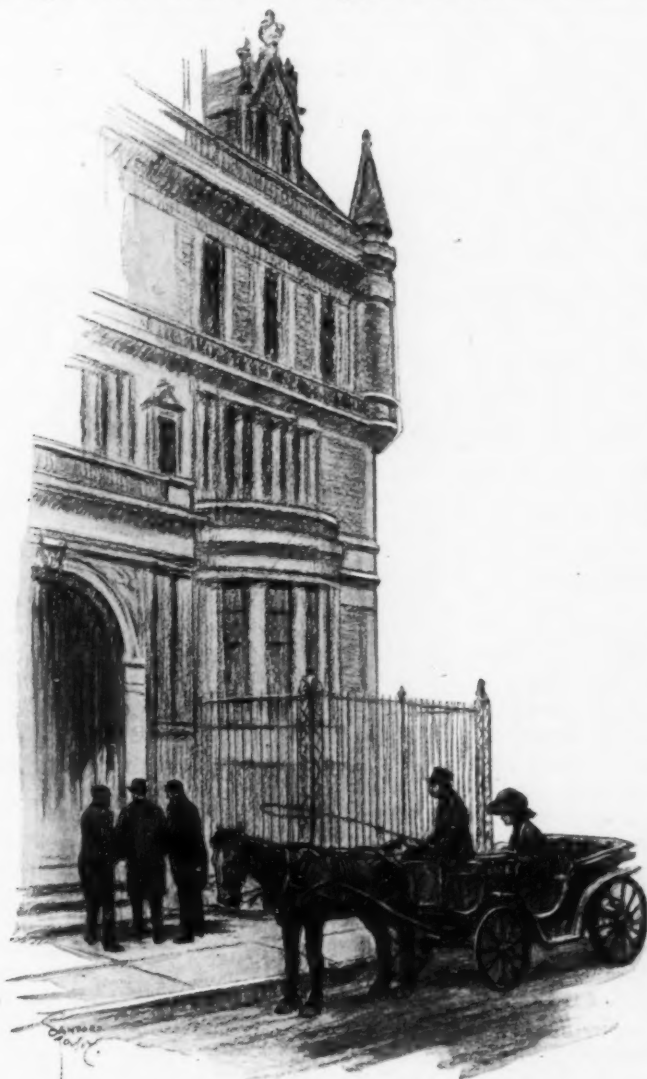
It was no venerable parent with whom she consulted, but with Young O'Keefe; and when he waxed sapient as to the true status of affairs, the howl of rage, derision and anguish that rent the heavens overlying the Williamsburg Bridge section, was as the shriek of a belated fire-engine.

"Who is this guy? What's he done?" roared Mr. O'Keefe with that refreshing disrespect for tradition which is the red-blood corpuscles of democracy. "He's just been his old man's son, who was one of them idle-rich railroad-magnets. Kiddin' a poor, hard-workin' girl like that! For two cents I'd lay for him and beat him up, I would!"

But Mr. O'Keefe's plaint was incomparable with the tornado that struck the corner of Fifth Avenue and one of the splendid, idle Fifties, whereto the Vankinck family was recalled by cable from

all parts of the earth, to reason, threaten and cajole against this act of love's alchemy which would fain transmute a Rafferty into a Vankinck. The affianced man's logic was simple: Rosie couldn't

he conducted his business affairs—which consisted of saying to his lawyers "Yes," "No," and "Attend to it for me," with perfect equanimity. Good-naturedly enough, however, he consented to see an



The hack anchored in front of the Vankinck residence

help her name, people or circumstances; she was *she*, for a' that! His relatives exchanged significant glances and put a detective on his track, but no sign of mental unbalance not normally present in love at first sight, manifested itself:

alienist. The alienist decreed that Rufus was not insane, but in love, but steadfastly refused to define the line of demarcation between those two mental states. Mr. Vankinck smiled indulgently. Nevertheless the family, who had

learned of his recent accident, urged him to undergo a physical examination. Dr. Emil Krumpffius of Berlin was cabled for and arrived by the next boat. The famous surgeon, having explored Mr. Vankinck's cranium, spoke of a slight pressure on the brain and (in confidence) of possible lesions and attendant mental idiosyncrasies. The subject maintained that he had never felt better in his life, and told Krumpffius that, to consent to an operation, would in itself be a sign of madness, and shipped him back to Berlin, to the appropriate tune of *Du bist verrückt, mein kind*.

Meanwhile preparations for the Amazing Mesalliance went on. Mr. Vankinck's yacht, the *Sakiak*, was redecored for a bridal-tour, and Rosie was sent to a convent-school to learn French, Italian, German and English. There Young O'Keefe lay in wait for her, claiming the bitter-sweet cup of a last interview.

"Are you really stuck on him?" pleaded the ever-faithful. "Gawwan! You can't really be stuck on him—a cheap guy livin', they tell me, on unearned increment, which is a kind of high-class graft! Don't you know that the *Evenin' Scoop* calls him and his folks social parasites? And aint Paris the French Tenderloin? For two cents I'd beat his block off and—"

"Sh-h, *mon ami*!" said Rosie. "He may be a millionaire, but I love him just the same. Don't go buttin' in, dearie. So-long—I mean, *auf wiedersehen*! My reegards to the boys when you see 'em."

One morning Mr. Vankinck experienced a slight numbness of the left leg, following which his left arm became similarly affected. Without a word to his family, he consulted a specialist, then engaged a room in a hospital and prepared for trephining. Before going under ether he signed a will, bequeathing the bulk of his vast estate to Miss Rose Rafferty, and made all arrangements for a bedside marriage ceremony in the event of adverse results. Five minutes before he was wheeled into the operating-room, Rosie saw him alone.

"It will come out all right, dearest,"

he said with false cheerfulness, as he strained her to his heart. "But if it—if it shouldn't"—and his voice broke—"always remember that I loved you, and you alone, with a profound, passionate devotion that seems to have begun ages ago in the shadow of Egyptian temples, or under the Chaldean stars, and that will continue forever and forever, throughout eternity. Say it after me, sweetheart."

"Forever and forever, throughout eternity," murmured Miss Rafferty, straightening her lingerie hat with her disengaged hand.

Twelve hours later the sudden panic of a telephone-bell summoned her to his bedside. Young O'Keefe, who had never ceased trailing her footsteps, like a pathetically faithful dog, saw her hurrying through the hospital entrance with pale, strained face and anxious eyes. With a hope so cruel that he dared not give it a name, he gained ingress to the waiting-room and paced to and fro for moments that seemed like hours, while the solitary ticking of the clock beat upon the heavy silence like cruel hammer-taps upon his brain. At last Rosie appeared, bent as beneath a blow, her handkerchief lifted to her white face, weeping silently. He took her to his arms and let her heart sob its bitter fill. At length he said, touched beyond his wont:

"I'm sorry about it, Rosie, awful sorry. He was a good feller after all, I guess. Was you in time for him to reckernize you?"

"Reckernize!" sobbed Miss Rafferty afresh. "Worse than that! The doctors lifted up the bone that was pressing on the brain, and he slep' fine all night, and come to as I was sittin' by him just now, holdin' his hand. When he opened his eyes and seen me, he sat right up in bed, he did, lookin' at me so queer, and says: 'Is it possible? Good God! Get out—'"

"Looney!" said Young O'Keefe in an awed whisper. "Bughouse! The poor guy!"

"No, *not* looney!" wailed Miss Rafferty. "That's just it! The operation un-



"What!" roared Young O'Keefe, "you mean to say he threw you down?"

concussed him—don't you see? When the pressure was relieved the paralysis quit, *and so did the other thing!*"

"What!" roared Young O'Keefe. "You mean to say he knowin'ly threw you down? Wait till he gets offen the flat of his back! If I don't lay for him and—"

"No, boyski!" pleaded Miss Rafferty,

beating a sword into a pruning hook by putting his clenched fist, arm inclusive, around her waist, "I'm sick of Parisites: I want just you, and little, old N'York. And it would be dangerous for you to hand him one, dearie, because— Well, he's got a peculiar temperament, and a good, stiff clip on top of the bean might easy set him back where he was before."

Two Less One, Leaves One

BY EUGENE P. LYLE, JR.

Author of "The Missourian," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MONTE CREWS

(See frontispiece)

THE captain of the tugboat, who was also commodore of the mud-scow fleet, had already lost one man that week—a twenty-ton slime avalanche buried him in the river's bed—and the leathery old captain was appalled by the responsibility of human life in his keeping. He wanted desperately to finish up this nasty government contract without losing another. The shocking realization had "mighty much near got his goat," and there were tears not very far beneath his profanity. He grasped at every incentive which might be urged on his crews for not getting drowned, as though they were bound to be careless and extravagant and needed to be beseechingly cursed into a decent regard for their own lives. It wasn't square to him, he told them plaintively, and promised that if in time he caught any fool trying it, he'd crack him over the coco with a crowbar.

This was why, on the next pay-day, he paid them off while there was yet another trip to make before they could go ashore and frolic in Petersburg town. He paid them off in the pilot-house while the dredges were loading the scows.

"Honest now," he said to each man, as he laid the requisite bills and silver in each muddy palm, "wouldn't it sure be real sinful to pass out with your wages on you, and so much corn whisky not lapped up yit? Honest, now, wouldn't it?"

Only when he had forced this point of view on the man would he let him go back to the scows. "They'll keep their carcasses intack this once, anyways," he assured himself, triumphantly.

The dredges filled the last scow with silt from the bottom of the Appomattox. The tug hitched on to the string of them, and, with the outgoing tide, patiently nursed them down the narrow, wooded stream into the broad, yellow James.

As they curved sluggishly round the bend of the channel where the two rivers meet, the captain at his wheel returned the salute of a waving arm and gingham apron on the bank. Arm and apron belonged to the captain's daughter. While this government contract lasted, she kept house for him in a little cottage with a big chimney under the trees that fringe the Appomattox.

Into the James the captain bent his tug, his unwieldy fleet sliding single file behind him like so many logs adrift. The captain looked forward to a dumping without a fatality. Then, coming back, he would tie up to one of the trees that shaded the cottage. There was going to be baked shad and roe for supper. So, the code of a waving apron and a young woman's arm had told him.

But, down the James at the dumping flats, when the captain had cast off and was turning upstream to hook on at the other end of his fleet, he wondered if something had happened. Something must have happened.

The scows were each divided into two enormous hoppers or pockets, and when the hinged bottom was dropped cut of a pocket, the mud cargo went crashing down into the river with the vicious speed of a landslide. But when rocks lodged and jammed in the mouth of the pocket, then there was danger. Men had to get down into the pocket with crowbars to clear the passage, and if it was

cleared too suddenly, the man was quick and lucky who did not go with the rush downward.

While the captain made the loop upstream in his tug, the scows had dumped. If any pocket had jammed, it also had been cleared. He could see this much, but what he could not see, as his eye ran along the fleet taking toll of human forms, was two men.

His count was off by two. In clammy dread he counted again. One scow was unmanned, and he knew instantly which two men were missing. As the corporeal substance of these two men was the most conspicuous of all his crew, so was their absence now. They were as good as four men, in fact they were as big as four men rolled into two. When they had been sent to him from the company's offices at Norfolk, he had mutteringly congratulated the company that they were not to be hired by the pound.

As he pulled over his wheel to head for the unmanned scow, his curses rose on the bosom of a sob. They had gone down through a pocket. That was what he expected to find. But a worse horror suddenly turned everything black in his brain. A word, a specter, was there. The word was "Murder." Had those two giants gone down with their huge fingers each at the throat of the other? "A woman," muttered the half-crazed captain, "a woman mixed up with mud-scows? O-oh—hell!"

II

It seemed meet and right, and a poetic coincidence, that the tug captain's two giants should take to each other, should become side partners, even as a man and his shadow, and startle beholders to admiration, for they were truly a team, as wonderfully matched a pair as any two big Percherons straining at their traces on a slippery hill.

Nature had obviously turned them out of the same titanic mold; circumstances had thrown them together, and it seemed somewhat quaint, and very satisfying, that they should supplement nature and circumstance and supply the essential hu-

man ingredient by taking to each other like two hugely magnified Dromios.

It was the affinity of brawn, and yet not altogether that, either. It was also the affinity of two clumsy, elephantine intelligences. It was an instinct to herd together, to form a league against the finer, quicker, fox-like intellects of the world of smaller men. Being instinct, this was unconscious. They were tolerant of the "littler uns," whether bosses, captains, task-masters, or bar-room riff-raff. They were as good-natured, and as indifferent, as a brace of mastiffs at a fox-terrier bench-show. Yet they had the diffidence of very slow plodding intelligence, and either was the other's unacknowledged sustenance in the league against the foxes.

Should they ever turn against each other, was a thought to make one smile—and shudder, too. They would be like two blindfolded elephants fitted with boxing gloves. A comical, clumsy tragedy indeed, for there would be no finesse, no proper adjustment of precise quieting force to a blow. Many would miss, and go laughably wild. But if one did *not* miss—

They were able-bodied seamen. Able-bodied? Looking at them, you smiled. The adjective seemed so unnecessary. It was like taking the trouble to mention that a mastodon was heavy. They were pretty much alike. If one was the simpler of the two, it was Slosh. If one was harder, it was Butch. "Slosh" and "Butch" were contractions, distortions, yet quite adequate for purposes of identification. In their cradles they probably had had Christian names. If so, these had sloughed off. On the pay-roll they had surnames, a good Irish one and a good Scotch one, but nowhere else.

As a babe, presumably, Slosh had been fair. His tousled mop was now a thick, yellowish clay. Butch's hair was a rusty black. As with his mate's, weather and brine had long since destroyed its original shade. Slosh's face was round, so round that his features seemed flat, though they were not. Butch's visage, on the contrary, was a solid thing of great cheek bones, great jaw bones, and his



Arm and apron belonged to the captain's daughter

teeth, with their maxillary installation, looked capable of biting through the anchor chain. Slosh's once blue eyes were sleepy, faded, slow, and unquestioning, very like, indeed, the eyes of a faithful old dog, whereas Butch's once black ones were now a heavy, dingy brown. But anger could polish the rust off them, and then they were as blue steel bullets. Slosh, so far as was known of men, had never been roused, so none might say aught of the awakening of *his* eyes.

These items, however, hardly served to differentiate the two men. Their huge physiques made them as twins, and lesser marks were forgotten. From the ends of nowhere they had first met, five years ago on a dock at Sparrows Point, Maryland, unloading steel girders. They were now within two years of thirty. One would be twenty-nine some eight months before the other.

They first saw the James from a two-masted schooner which discharged her cargo at Norfolk, then was to go up the river to Blair's Wharf to take on cordwood. Off Hog Island the wind died out, and the schooner's captain hailed a passing tug, which steamed alongside, and the two captains dickered wrathfully on the price of a tow to Blair's Wharf. The tug was the *Naomi M.*, and her leathery old captain's name was MacManus. Neither item is particularly sensational, but in the window of the pilot-house there was a face under a sunbonnet, and it was a young face of seasoned rose and tan, with discerning, musing, brown eyes that knew the channel of the river or of rough man's hopes, in either of which she could steer capably and never ground on the flats. Her name was also MacManus, also Naomi. She was the tug captain's daughter.

Slosh's bare forearms, like two Smithfield hams, rested on the bulwarks of the schooner, and his short-stemmed clay pipe that burned his nose was in his mouth, when the tug steamed alongside; and as his lazy eyes wearily lifted to the window of the tug's pilot-house, the short-stemmed clay pipe suddenly wobbled between his teeth and fell overboard. Butch, who was squatting like an ogre

on the forward bitt, splicing the cow-tail end of a hawser, had seen her already, and his eyes had not left her. The rust was polished off those iron pupils. They were, as I have said they could be, like blue steel bullets. If the girl perceived either, as distinct from the river scenery, she gave no sign discernible by man. Finally the tug hitched on and steamed ahead, and the schooner followed like a placid cow at the end of her tether.

At Blair's, the tug captain met the schooner captain ashore and collected his tow bill, thereafter slipping back down the river with his tug and his daughter. He returned three days later to tow the schooner back to Norfolk, but this time no daughter was with him. At Norfolk the schooner tied up, because her captain must needs scour the town for a cook to replace the one who had deserted at Blair's, and while he was gone Slosh came to Butch and held forth a big paw, sheepishly.

They had been inseparable during five years, but Butch only said: "Tired o' your berth here, huh?" and they shook paws in farewell, evincing no emotion, vouchsafing no information. For as it happened Butch likewise had a plan, and further likewise, it did not include his shipmate.

Slosh had had time to lose himself among the buildings along the river front when Butch in similar fashion landed himself and battered slop-chest on the dock. Stowing the chest conveniently away in the Sailor's First Chance at the corner of the alley, he thereafter found and entered the offices of the Hampton Roads Navigation & Wrecking Co., and growled inquiries as to the whereabouts of the boss. Eventually he was conveyed into the presence of the superintendent of tugboats. The super gazed on him with even more astonishment than admiration.

"Now, by Jupiter," he exclaimed, "here's a pea out of the same pod!"

This was very genial, and even encouraging, but it conveyed nothing to Butch's slow intelligence. A deep rumbling became articulate to the effect that the sailor man wanted a job.

The super seemed to expect as much. "As fireman on the *Nomie M.*, I'll bet you," he declared.

The big sailor blinked, and nodded.

The super was elated. "I thought so," he cried. "When coincidences once begin, they're the one best bet. They certainly are."

"When do I start?" Butch demanded.

"Oh now," said the super, "hold on. You've got to take your end of the coincidence, you know. The second time this half-hour I have to mention that there's already a fireman on the *Nomie M.*"

"Aw," said Butch, "I knowed that, for aint I seen him? But a fireman is so li'ble to git bashed, 'specially on shore, and then what 'u'd you do for a fireman?"

"Bless my soul," ejaculated the super, "if you're not another prophet, too! But look-a-here, prophets might get locked up. I don't reckon you could fire the *Nomie M.* from the calaboose, could you?"

"P'r'aps not," Butch reluctantly conceded. The logic of the fox-creatures was always so remorseless. The mired whale longed for the sustaining nearness of his mate.

"Then," said the super, "why not some other job?"

Butch shook his head glumly.

"I was just thinking," the super went on, no wise discouraged, "that as the *Nomie M.* is going up the river on a government contract towing scows, you'd might like a job on one of the scows. The *Nomie's* captain wouldn't mind an extra mud-lark or," added the super, "two."

"When do I begin?" Butch demanded.

"The *Nomie* goes up to-night. Report to Captain MacManus." Then, as Butch's retreating back momentarily clouded the doorway like a load of hay, the super declared to himself: "If a man could only play coincidences, Lord, what a system!"

Butch set forth to report on the *Naomi M.* at once. As he reached the piles where she rocked, he noticed two great thick soled shoes dangling over her nose,

and there sat Slosh, a new clay pipe wobbling between his teeth. They blinked at each other in clumsy, elephantine fashion, trying to straighten out coincidences, which might be game for the fox-creatures, but were to them Egyptian Mystery.

III

On the pay day of the mud-scow fleet, mentioned at the beginning, the two able-bodied seamen had been steady mud-larks during five months. The loyalty of the brace of big, wandering fellows to their jobs was a thing at once pathetic and beautiful. Of the state of their old friendship one hastens to say less, as being less pleasant. But at least there had been no outbreaks.

"No outbreak—yet," might have been a daily bulletin, carried to an uneasy captain on his tug, much as another bulletin, "All quiet on the Potomac," used to be carried to an anxious gentleman in the White House.

Yet such a bulletin implies something smoldering, and the fleet was all eyes and ears for an explosion. The black scowl of a giant is ominous of storm; of two giants, it is indicative of weather brewing that will be worse than rain. Suspicion groped clumsily for the right answer in each of two sullen brains. What crafty treachery was the other meditating? And so busy was each simple fellow in trying to anticipate guile in the other, that neither had time for guile of his own.

Meantime, in the doorway of the cottage on the bank of the Appomattox, or in the shade of the trees at the edge, Miss MacManus waved handkerchief, cup-towel, dust-rag, whichever at the moment was in her hand, to her father on the *Naomi M.* as he passed, going out or returning, with the sluggish squadron behind him. The captain would not have her on the tug during this business, and the nymph of the *Naomi M.* turned siren and wig-wagged what was in the skillet. Whereupon the tug's whistle shrieked gleeful anticipation.



"Right now's the time I want the eighteen you been owin' me"

But always before the maid turned into the house, there was a laughing toss of her head, a pause, and then, as if to say, "Oh well, if it'll make you any happier," she gave an extra flirt to the handkerchief, cup-towel, or dust-rag. Nor was this any part of the filial culinary code. It was, rather, of a code far more universal, and it was solely for two pairs of expectant eyes on the last

scow. It was for them both impartially, but Slosh could never be sure that it wasn't for Butch, and Butch wondered sometimes if it could really be for Slosh. Whereat the two storm clouds grew a shade blacker, and there were muttering growls, as of thunder below the horizon.

This had occurred, as usual, on the pay day mentioned, as tug and tows turned into the James, and the captain

was hoping against disaster and thinking of shad for supper. But this time, in Slosh's deep chest, the muttering growl took the form of human speech.

"Butch," he said, when they could no longer see the cottage on the bank, "you, I mean, Butch, as they aint nobody else on this ship, and I'm talkin' to yuh."

Butch's hands closed into fists, each a block of bone and gristle at his side, and he took a step nearer, his head on its bull neck thrust forward. "Talk," he said.

"You've got," said Slosh, "forty dollars in your clothes, and right now's the time I want the eighteen you been owin' me."

Butch dug furiously into his trousers' pocket and jerked out a roll of bills, his month's wages, as he might a snake that had fastened on him. "Eighteen, you say?" But that much was mechanical. He paused when thought struck him. "I don't mind me," he said, "borrowin' no eighteen dollars."

"Sure you don't," said Slosh. "You was on a spree."

"When was I on a spree?" He had refrained from drinking for months past. The easy facilities for it on land, to say nothing of that more patent incentive to decency whom they had just seen on the bank, had taken away the desire. "When was I?" he repeated with indignation.

"In Baltimore, the last time."

"And you let me been owin' it to yuh all this time—since we been on these scows!" Viciously he began counting off the bills.

"Well, what of it?" Slosh retorted. "I aint needed it before. But this month I was laid off till last week for my chills, and there wasn't ten dollars ccm'in' to me, and now I got to git some new clothes. Eighteen, and I want it, Butch."

Butch shoved the bills, all of them, back in his pocket. "Not much you don't," he said, glaring, gloating. "Thought you'd git 'em out o' me, didn't yuh? Eh, didn't yuh? So's you could start callin' on *her* again, didn't yuh? Not much you don't, naw."

For Butch was sure at last that he had put his thick thumb on Slosh's elu-

sive perfidy. Butch had had the field to himself of late, and here was Slosh trying to get back again at Butch's expense. The nerve of it! Butch was staggered; more, he was raging mad. In his right mind he would have known that his old mate was quite correct about the eighteen dollar debt.

Slosh looked down at his slime smeared togs, which were all he had except others that were worse, and he knew the suit he wanted to buy that very night in Petersburg. And he had not talked with Naomi MacManus since before his chills, while Butch—

Two other fists were blocks of bone and gristle, and it was Slosh who took the next step nearer, and Butch was one man who now knew what Slosh's old-dog-Tray eyes looked like when Slosh was roused. The two huge creatures stiffened and each with plodding calculation was measuring the other when the tug's whistle blew.

It was the call of the boss; always the tyranny of the "littler uns," interfered. Private death affairs of giants must wait. The whistle was the signal to dump the scows, and from habit the two adversaries hurried to obey, Slosh running along the narrow strip of deck to the aft pocket, and Butch to the one forward. Each turned a ratchet wheel, not unlike the brake on a box car, first on one side, then on the other, thus letting the pair of long iron shutters that floored the pocket fall open. In the aft pocket the mass of sand and mud broke and caved down the center, and the valley thus formed sank and sank, until the bottom of it slipped into the river, and then the sides of the valley cascaded down, so that almost instantly the pocket was empty and the stern of the barge rose buoyantly. Slosh wondered why the bow had not lightened as well.

But in the forward pocket there were several large rocks, and at the first break they crunched fast together in the mouth of the hopper and jammed. The avalanche stopped before it had really begun. In a new rage because of this delay, Butch caught up a crowbar and leaped into the treacherous little valley of sand.



That night they did ask her, blocking the doorway

Thrusting the crowbar down between the rocks he pried and strained. One or two he must have loosened but he kept on, not noticing that the sand under him was trickling thinly down, as through an hour glass, nor that the trickling grew faster and faster. But when he tried to move, his ankles seemed to be wrapped with an unseen arm, lightly indeed, and even caressingly, and then he saw that the sand was to his knees and

that he was sinking deeper. With both hands, as one uses a pole for vaulting, he dug the crowbar into the sliding bank of slime as high up the bank as his arms would reach. It wedged between rocks and held, and by it he pulled himself upwards towards the deck, but when he thought himself safe, he felt again that insidious tug downward, and knew that the rocks themselves were slowly joining the avalanche.

"Slosh!" he yelled, for panic had him now.

Slosh's big boots came clattering, and Slosh fell to his knees on the deck at the spot nearest Butch, and reached down for him. Butch held to the crowbar with his left hand, and stretched up his right. By the breadth of his palm he missed the other's grasp. He thought swiftly that Slosh might have leaned farther over, and with that thought came despair and a maniac's rage, for—why *should* Slosh lean farther over?

"Reach me an end of the crowbar," Slosh roared at him. "Quick, man, you're sinkin'!"

"And faster I'll sink without it, you murderer," gasped Butch.

"Quick! Hell! Quick! Please, please, Butch!"

"I cain't. She's stuck." Butch's free hand was in his trousers' pocket. His eyes were a devil's. He jerked out the hand, holding the roll of bills. "Here," he shrieked, "maybe you can reach the money. Quick, snatch it before I go!"

At the sight of that fist of bills sinking into the river, Slosh's own eyes were not good to see. He threw himself on his stomach across the deck, and reached down. With a powerful upward pull on the crowbar, Butch made good the space between the groping hand but instead of holding up the bills in his fingers he wrapped those fingers round Slosh's wrist: "You come too," he snarled. He flung up his other hand with its five fingers curved to clutch the wrist, and, so, bring all his great weight and strength on Slosh's arm.

Slosh struck and clawed at the vise on his wrist, but his free hand and arm fell short. In the instant of eternity yet given him, he swung this free hand and arm backward, and none too soon gripped the outer edge of the deck. Thus he held, and the man below held to him, while the bones in the pinioned arm wrenched and cracked. The suction of tons of mud engulfing Butch pulled at the arm as if surely to tear it from its socket. Agony distorted his features, and he looked, because he must, down at the hideous, revengeful grin of his

mate. Then the grin passed. The grip on his wrist relaxed. "My dam' back's broken," gasped Butch. He was giving out. The sand had risen to his shoulders, pulling him, dragging him down. Slosh could have snatched the bills as the fingers loosened, but somehow, instead, his own fingers closed round Butch's wrist, and his jaws ground together.

As long afterwards as three eternal minutes, something bumped and scraped against the barge, and men came leaping aboard. Thereupon with dispatch they performed that deed which might be entitled "The Rescue of the Colossi."

When, at last, they were in the tug, said Butch, bruised though nowhere broken: "Here's the eighteen, Slosh. Cap says we're to both come to supper, and you aint fit in them duds."

Said Slosh: "I been thinkin', Butch, but aint it the girl that does the decidin'?"

"We might ask her and see," said Butch. "Yes, sir, we'll up and do it, this very night, simultaneous. Slosh, I've been skeered to do it all alone."

"So've I," said Slosh.

And that night they heroically did ask her, blocking the doorway at the very ultimate moment of parting, touching elbows—a truly creditable feat. It would have been all right, too, only Miss Naomi MacManus had not been able to make up her mind. She conceded gravely, though her eyes were twinkling and tearful both at the same time, that she was the one to decide, thus verifying Slosh's theory, but if she couldn't, she couldn't, and she'd be right pleased to see them both 'most any evening if they'd care to keep on calling.

"Yes'm, sure," said Slosh and Butch, simultaneously, as she gave them each a hand to shake.

The next morning, however, Butch did not report for work. He had "faded away." The problem remaining was simple arithmetic, and within Butch's powers. For Butch knew that two less one leaves one. And with but one to choose from, he figured, any girl could make up her mind. And the girl did.

The Duckling's Handicap

BY HARVEY WICKHAM

ACHIME of bells from the church across the street let fall three warning strokes. The Duckling, hiding behind a pillar in the basement of the bank, stirred uneasily. In fifteen minutes it would be midnight.

What circumstance had named Joe Grogan "The Duckling" he could no longer remember. He had been overtaken by the descriptive epithet while he was a mere boy, fighting his way through school. It followed him in youth—a straightforward but pugnacious youth, that developed a hard punch, a hatred of crooked deals, and made him the middle-weight champion of his state. And "Duckling" he still was, though he had become what his father termed "respectable," and was doing his best not to go to the mat as a clerk in the City Bank.

The name fitted him. He had a squat, ungainly figure, with bow-legs better adapted to a waddle than a walk. His voice was an honest quack that absolutely refused to tone itself down to the affected drawl of his new associates. And, last but not least, he wore a general air of being out of his element.

The ring would have been his natural pond if he had not been nagged with the charge that prize-fighting was a disgrace to the family, and had he not also made the discovery that where all seemed fairest sport something underhand was more than likely going on. This poisoned him—for he soon had "a wonderful nose for frame-ups"—and when the old dad managed to scrape enough together to buy a few bank shares, son was not unwilling to be boosted into a clerkship.

There was some trouble at the weighing-in, for the president frankly told him that the only bank job he looked fitted for was the janitor's; but the

president's son, having indulged in several profitable glimpses of his pugilistic career from the vantage ground of the betting-ring, put in a good word, and the Duckling was accepted. It was a part of his nature to be grateful. The monthly salary was considerably under a rubber's wages. Working behind a gilded grating was very much like being in prison. To give up that muscular activity which had been his very life-breath, hurt more than a knock-out blow. And as for figures—foot-work, not head-work, was what he was famous for. But family pride had to be satisfied, and he expected to find compensation in an atmosphere of plain dealing, which, he imagined, must surround a bank like an aura.

The other clerks, girlish-looking fellows, who divided their spare time between admiring their clothes and laughing at the new-comer, were, in their own peculiar way, as strictly—one might almost say as passionately—honest as himself. Yet, much to his surprise, his oversensitive nose was as much troubled as ever. He could not have told how he knew it, but there was something very rotten in that particular section of the state of New Jersey. A feeling of suspicion prevailed. Men took care not to leave their books where anybody else could tamper with them. It took no prophet to guess that it would be every man for himself when the crash came. Small amounts had been missing from the cash—amounts which reappeared as mysteriously as they had vanished. Yet no one was discharged. Had the peculator—if there were one—been lucky enough to cover his tracks? Was somebody being given rope until he should entangle himself to the destruction point? Was protection being handed down from higher up? Or was it all

merely nervousness and panic on the part of the employees?

The Duckling *knew* before he had been in the place a month. It was not at all difficult for the keenly developed instinct of the ring-general to detect that certain miasma in the moral atmosphere of even so unfamiliar a place as the bank: men's minds run in channels nearly parallel; men's eyes open window-like into the thoughts within; and one so used to watching an antagonist's eyes as the Duckling, soon learned—what he learned. And not only did the one-time prize-fighter have a general premonition of "crooked-work," but with what seemed some uncanny prescience, he sensed the source of the trouble and determined with which of his fellows the subtly disturbing vibrations of unrest began. Yet he steadfastly told himself this suspicion was nonsense—was a thing unbelievable.

Somehow, none the less, the Duckling felt it incumbent upon *him* to keep watch. He was of course anxious to save his own neck when the *débauché* should come, but above and beyond that anxiety, he experienced another and deeper responsibility. *He* was not like these herded, blinker-eyed clerks with whom he worked, but was a two-fisted young man with eyes to see and ears to hear, who was used to the ways of the wily and had known what it was to steer a straight course among crooked paths. Therefore he watched—covertly, cannily, without intermission. By day his observant glance caught frequent and premonitory signals; soon the increasing recurrence of these warnings led him into the habit of taking nocturnal strolls in the neighborhood of the bank. And thus it happened that late one warm, breathless evening, he found the back alley door of that supposedly well-guarded institution unlocked.

Swiftly the Duckling retreated to the deeper shadow of a telegraph pole and stood there motionless, watching—watching. Nothing happened; there was no sound; he caught no tell-tale gleam of light. Yet many things might be transpiring in the interior of the bank,

down in the basement where the vaults were, without any betraying sign making itself manifest. Presently, therefore, he was rash enough to follow his unlucky nose to the source of the trouble—to enter the bank and tip-toe down to the basement.

He had a good motive—he could have given it a name had he seen fit—but he knew that no one but himself would believe it. So it was but natural that he should stir uneasily when he heard the chime-notes shiver their way through the semi-darkness of the basement. He felt weak, as from great physical exertion, for he had already discovered appalling things, and he could hardly stifle an oath as he let himself sink cautiously to a sitting posture on the pillar's ornamental base.

In fifteen minutes it would be midnight—and the bank's private watchman lay snoring on a cushioned seat at the head of the stair. The Duckling had almost brushed him on his way down. Had the same hand which caused the alley door to be left unsecured treated the watchman to a drink of doctored whisky? The Duckling wished that he had not seen the fellow drinking with a certain young gentleman that very evening at the saloon around the corner. Yet it signified nothing. Young gentlemen may occasionally lay down the armor of exclusiveness and be kind to their less fortunate fellow-beings. The Duckling's own job bore witness to that fact. Why was it, then, that one gentleman's cigars, still as large, as fine, and as frequently proffered as ever, had recently begun to taste bad in his mouth? Was it a crime for the well-born to be hail-fellow-well-met with the watchman?

The little barred window that gave upon the sidewalk line let fall no light upon these dark inquiries, and failed much to assist the single electric bulb which hung before the entrance of the currency vault in the task of physical illumination. But the window enabled those without to get a peep at the gray nickel-steel of the vault door and at the clock-face of the old-fashioned time-

lock. He knew that from experiment. Window and bulb together formed a handy thief-detector for the assistance of the policeman on the beat. The Duckling, thinking too late of his own predicament, felt the slow creep of panic in his bones. If he stirred from the protecting shadow of the pillar, he laid himself open to detection, not only by the policeman but by any passer-by. If he remained there, he would be discovered by the first-come to the basement. But who would come at such an hour? Not the watchman, for his breathing indicated a state bordering upon coma. Nobody else had a right to come. Yet the Duckling was not more certain of his own rash stupidity than that he would be visited before the night was over.

For the moment he and the time-lock were the only guardians of the bank's treasure. It had been the custom for years to keep the mechanism set so as to lock the vault until noon. The morning business was always conducted with the contents of a smaller safe upstairs. And the time-lock was a faithful servant. Its muffled ticking came like the tapping of heels upon the floor through its metallic sheath. How easy it would have been to rob the bank but for the time-lock. The dullest ears could tell when the policeman passed, and the Duckling had already discovered that a full half-hour intervened between his rounds. Evidently the bank relied upon its time-lock—old as it was—since it took hardly any other precaution to safeguard its treasure. Could it be misplaced confidence?

The ticking quickened—as it will do occasionally in the best regulated escape-ments—as though to refute such a charge. But there was a curious echo—and again that suggestion of heels upon a marble floor. The Duckling turned his head, slowly and cautiously. The echo ceased. But there came, at the same instant, the unmistakable thump, thump of the patrolman's boots on the sidewalk. He was a full minute ahead of schedule time, for his half-hour would not be up until twelve.

The boots paused for a moment before the window, and the Duckling felt

his heart beat violently. He called himself a fool to have come here. Let the intending felon roast his bacon if he wanted to. But the footsteps passed into the distance, and silence descended, impalpable, yet stifling, in the midst of which it was not only difficult to hear, but to see or to breathe. Involuntarily holding his breath, the Duckling grew dizzy. He felt as if he had suddenly become blind and deaf. This was more terrifying than a dozen policemen, for he could not be certain whether the heels that he had fancied traversing the corridor were silent or advancing. He seemed to be surrounded by a host of enemies against which no weapon that he was master of could avail.

But as the breath escaped slowly from his lungs he again caught the stentorian breathing of the faithless watchman and the infallible *tick-tick-tick* of the time-lock. The ghostly heels were silent and he felt better. Even his eyes were comforted by the sight of shadows that, now, were plainly shadows. There was the long mahogany table with a paper-knife clear upon it, a leather-cushioned chair at each end; the grating which separated him from the safe-deposit room, and all the rest of the furnishings were as daylight had left them. Upon the walls the colors of the frescoes shone faintly—a bit of gold-leaf here and there catching the rays of the electric bulb and throwing a sparkle as if to assure him that the painted figures of Thrift and Economy were tirelessly sharing his watch. And clear above all, the great clock-face showed white in the middle of the vault front. Its hands were now upraised, like those of a miser praying heaven for protection against thieves. It was twelve o'clock. The Duckling sprang to his feet and stood trembling with excitement before the vault door. Something quite alarming had happened.

For an instant he could not make out what that something was—though, subconsciously, he had expected it. Now that it had taken place, he doubted his senses. Perhaps it was only another trick that his ears had played him—a

delusion akin to the click of the criminal heels he had seemed to hear upon the marble. At the very instant of midnight, the clock, instead of ticking quietly on, had given birth to a sound familiar enough in its proper season, but now confirmatory of his worst fears—the sharp click of a bolt shot back by a released spring. The clock had mistaken midnight for noon—had unlocked the vault twelve hours ahead of time.

What a pretty piece of villainy—for some one who knew how to have turned the hands around and around so that when they seemed to be pointing at daylight hours they would in reality, so far as the levers were concerned, be marking the hours of the following night. But it could not be. He had imagined it. Had the click really sounded, the vault door could now be opened by a turn of the gold-plated knob that glistened like a stud from its steel gray bosom.

He should have known better than to come spying into the basement merely to balk the anticipated crime of one who had befriended him. Maybe the friend had had reasons for wishing a disreputable person in the bank. The Duckling distrusted even his own motives. Had he been flattered out of his wits by the attentions of one above him? Was he a "tod hunter," bent upon currying favor in high quarters?

It was simple madness which prompted his next move. Unable to endure the suspense, and still in doubt whether he had heard the machinery whirr or not, he reached out his hand, gave the knob the proper turn, and pulled vigorously. The great door, moving noiselessly upon its well-oiled, ball-bearing hinges, swung open. The cash reserve of the bank lay before his eyes.

But he had no time to consider the new situation. Something touched him on the shoulder. He wheeled around. There, very pale, but with a forced, cynical sneer upon his face, stood the president's son.

"Thought you'd rob the bank, did you? I noticed you looked a little queer around the gills. I've been watching you

for a week. The game's up. Come along."

"You scoundrel!" gasped the Duckling, wrenching his shoulder free. "Who set the clock wrong? Do you think you can pull such a stupid bluff off on me just because you find me here to block your little game?"

"Whose bluff do you think they'll believe at police headquarters—yours or mine? Don't be a fool, Duckling. The only thing for you to do is to give up quietly, plead guilty and beg for a light sentence."

This deliberate roguery swept the Duckling back upon his old resources. He forgot all about the lessons he had been trying to learn about the gentleman's way of fighting. He saw red. A quick blow to the point of the chin sent the president's son reeling.

At last Duckling was in his element—so he thought. He had never felt himself quite a man, putting over a ledger. The sheer indolence of it was almost as bad as the corruption of the ring. But to be mixed up in a genuine battle with fists for weapons and right on his side—it did look as if his lifelong handicap were removed at last.

But he soon discovered that he was more desperately handicapped than ever. He meant to administer a sound thrashing, strictly according to Queensberry rules—literally to beat the devil out of his whilom friend. He had seen rogues reformed by blows before. When the last atom of fight is knocked from a man his black thoughts are apt to go with it. Why couldn't the whole miserable business be hushed up? He did not know what particular burglar's tools would be required to set the time-lock back, but no doubt the president's son did. All that the occasion required was a swift victory.

But the other had no intention of going down before the fists of the former champion. In fair fight the president's son, in spite of a certain agility, stood no chance to win against the awkward-appearing yet scientific strength of his antagonist. Recovering from the blow, he lifted his left arm horizontally be-

fore his face, but it was a mere feint. The Duckling felt a sharp blow squarely below the belt. He had been fouled.

Instinctively, he doubled up, shoving his foe from him—this time in the direction of the mahogany table. The direction was an unfortunate one, for on the table lay the substantial steel paper knife.

The president's son, staggering back against the table, put out a hand. Feeling the cold touch of the steel, his fingers tightened, and a new light sprang into his eyes. He came on boldly now. The Duckling wondered—until he caught sight of the weapon flashing before his face.

"Surrender!" snarled the man before him.

The Duckling said nothing, but held his ground. He noted instantly that the other held the knife unskillfully. Had the blade rested in the palm of the hand, point outwards, it might have been another matter. As it was, he determined to take a chance, and, when the arm descended, he caught it neatly about the wrist. Nobody can strike a telling blow—or even make an effective slash—with the arm extended.

But the president's son clung to the weapon, and threw his whole weight upon his wrist in a desperate attempt to wrench it free. As the men writhed, the one like a snake in the other's grasp, the Duckling received a flesh wound, and drops of blood began to sprinkle the marble slab under his feet. Yet he managed to deal two stout blows with his right. The knife clashed to the floor. A creature, nearly stunned, was to be seen crawling away on all fours like a whipped dog.

"Come back here and take your medicine, you fool!" cried the Duckling. "I won't kill you. There's no such yellow streak in my veins."

The president's son, who had almost reached the foot of the stairway, paused, as if giving consideration to this proposal. Then he scrambled to his feet and began once more slowly to advance. Why should he run away from a miser-

able clerk, rescued from low life on his own recommendation? The Duckling's position was untenable. He was to all intents and purposes a thief caught in the act. But his own position was impregnable. What if he did kill this lunk of an ex-prize-fighter? Nobody would impugn his motives. He would be applauded for having saved the bank's cash from a felonious attack.

So he continued to advance, and, whereas the faint light of the place had at first showed two limp hands dangling by his sides, there was only one hand visible now. The other had crept to his hip pocket.

The Duckling, about to "wade in" and end the fight, found himself confronted with a suddenly leveled revolver.

If he had waited for instructions from his brain he must either have surrendered or been shot. As it was, his muscles, acting from a deep instinct, flung him headlong upon his antagonist, bearing him prone to the floor. The revolver clattered beside the knife, and for a moment the two men fought like wildcats in an access of fury.

The Duckling was the first to extricate himself. Getting back to ring posture, he caught the other by the collar and dragged him to his knees. Only a Don Quixote would have thought of Queensberry now, and a low left swing sent the near-assassin back to the floor and into complete insensibility.

With the confidence of a man who has found himself, the Duckling waited until the other had opened his eyes. Then, in a voice that showed no fear of disobedience, he issued his orders:

"Keep quiet until the cop outside has made his twelve-thirty round. Then mop up the floor and fix the clock. Be careful on your way out. And keep your mouth shut—do you hear?"

"Yes," said the president's son, humbly, and he started to pour forth a flood of repentance. But the Duckling turned his back, and in a few minutes was waddling cheerfully away in the direction of home.



You knew the truth—"It was Christmas Morning!"

"But Once A Year—"

BY GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND

Author of "Don't You Remember," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY BLANCHE FISHER WRIGHT

AWAY, 'way back about the time when They first began to say: "Well, don't you think we might as well get Dado" —(think o' that for a nickname, will you? Dado! Huh!)"—"get Dado something *useful* this year?"—Christmas used to be really-truly soul inspiring and heart gripping and so cram full of mysteries and hopes and fears and thrills and expectations that even in retrospect it lies infinitely beyond all telling in mere human words.

It began sometime in November, after Thanksgiving was well done and painfully digested; began with a counting-

off of weeks and days. And as these shortened and the cold and snow set in and it began to get real wintry, the first positive symptoms developed. The tension began to grow. Sometimes, when you just happened to steal into Mother's or Sister's room, casually as it were, they would suddenly shut the bottom bureau-drawer and lock it and look aggressively innocent. Even though your years could easily have been counted on your two hands, leaving a few odd thumbs and fingers to spare, you entertained shrewd suspicions about that bureau. But never mind; it was the time



— Blanche Fisher Wright —

The worship of Santa had been shattered by father's slippers

of year, They told you, when little boys mustn't be snooping 'round. "Now, Dado, run away and play! What's that? Why, of course not! What made you think of such a thing?"

So you went away and tried to play, without any very conspicuous success, for your mind and soul were filled with something you were positive you had seen *just* before They had heard you and had slammed that bureau-drawer.

A natural born skeptic, anyhow, you liberally discounted Their glib explanations. Then, too, you never had felt quite the same about anything They affirmed, since the time, a whole year back, when the Great Disillusionment had crushed down and in upon you.

Yet even though the love and worship of Santa (the children's real God) had been accidentally shattered by father's slippers projecting from under a fur robe which bore a strong resemblance to the old buffalo-skin in the stable, and by father's own red beard showing through the cotton-batting, Santa still lurked around somewhere in the back of your mind. I suppose a good many people, who claim to be grown-up, likewise keep cognate beliefs dimly and dustily hid behind their mental furniture. Perhaps all of us do—who knows?

That slipper-incident had been the beginning of the end of good old Santa and the North Pole palace and the reindeer and the stove post-office. How won-

drous, while it lasted!—like many another faith we still cling hold of, despite all reasoning, because we need and want such things, because they comfort us and answer the Unanswerable! You felt a vast and personal loss when you realized that there could no longer be any use in praying to Santa or in sending him letters up the chimney. Sister tried to get you to keep up the fiction, but it was no use; you couldn't. The slippers and the buffalo-robe had wrecked all that, forever. But even now, yes, surely you recall that pot-bellied old stove with the many isinglass doors all round it—a "base-burner" such as rarely is to be come across in these dull days of furnaces and steam-heat. If any fire on earth *could* get a message through to Santa, that old base-burner could. It had a big bed of the hottest coals in the world, all wavering and white; and once you threw by accident a beautiful, many-colored rubber ball right through one of those flimsy doors. In a few seconds, nothing remained of the ball save a black and crinkly jigamaree, which, even as you watched it, turned white and fell away to dust. The memory of that tragic loss has not yet faded from your mind.

Upon those ardent coals, before you knew the truth, you used to offer up your little Christmas-letter with as profound and pure a faith as any in this singular mix of men and things that we know as the World. Right into the stove you and Sister used to fling the letter; you used to watch it brown and smoke and suddenly go puff! and vanish in a wisp of black. Then you knew, *knew*, it had gone to Santa—

The old stove never seemed quite the same, after you found out. A little resentment harbors in your soul, even now, against it. How can we love the instruments that dissect away from us the *vestigia* which we needs must lose?

Certainly, that letter-writing had to cease. But, here now in your little daughter's childish scrawl, what lieth on your desk? A modern prayer, saved by your innocent legerdemain from its fiery fate in the kitchen range:

Brown Teddy with sweater, colty, trees, flag, cow, doll and close, Books, kitty Cat, drum hobby horse, boy Doll, mittens ball, Fairy, white Stuffed doggy, Star, bells sled Candle, Big doll, dove-birdy, oggin (orange, of course!) Umbrello cart & Horsey to pull it, doll Carriage trumpet teddy dressed all in Close like a Dolly, set Of furs, clock rabbit or Pig, cart pencil, little Pack of cards, bath tub also Cane, Butterfly, fishy goat.

Is it possible that all this is again enacting itself as a reality in other minds? And that *you*, now, have to hide away the slippers and the buffalo-robe, lest they disillusion and distress and give the first great deadly shock to Faith?

II

Pass all that, however, and now (if you still can) bring down your mental lens to focus on the actual approach of the great Day That Came But Once a Year—the day, alas, that never comes to you now, and never can, in any faintest simulacrum of the glory and the splendor it once had. That Day, *then*, was for your childish year the culmination and the crown. In those times and that far western place where you dwelt, there were no huge, bewildering toy-stores, their basements and their counters jammed to distraction with a million gewgaws. Nothing like that existed at all, to take off the keen edge, to blunt the sensibilities and tarnish the bright mirror wherein Joy Absolute reflected itself splendidly. Things meant more then; the *blasé* child of Now, his mind and palate sated with colored supplements, with weekly toys and with o'er-much chocolate, how can he revel, as did you, in the gauds of Christmas and the twisty, Elizabethan-ruffy yards and yards of candy? Out West, those days, such things *were* something. Were they? Just close your eyes, drift back, remember—if you can!—and let your heart make answer.

As the Day came nigh, the tension stretched and stretched out like a rubber band aimed with insecticidal intention at a fly. You could feel the very air



—Blanche Fisher Wright—

If any fire on earth could get a message through, that old base-burner could

a-quiver. Everywhere, was mystery. Folks took to coming in the back door and whisking up the kitchen stairs; sometimes, if you were quick enough, you could catch the rustle of paper on strange parcels. Keyed up you were, and eager, and inquisitive; yet God forbid that you should really ever have taken any opportunity to pull out that lower bureau-drawer! How sad, how inexpressibly sacrilegious to have done that—to have discounted the surprises, foretasted the Unknown! Or to have opened

prematurely the parcels, little and big, that came by mail (never "by post" in those days—no, by mail) from Aunt Eva, or Uncle Fred, very neatly wrapped and tied with pink string and conspicuously marked in the best possible printing: "Don't Open Till Christmas!" Oh, never! *That* would have been like beginning dinner with the blanc-mange or the floating island and so working backward to the meat-victuals and the soup.

No, all such things were kept invio-

late, spirited away by Mother or by Sis, to join the goodly company of the bureau-drawer. But just to handle and poke and sniff and speculate—there were pretty fair-sized thrills even in that!

The days, behold, they passed. They became seven, five, three, one—then, lo! TO-MORROW WAS CHRISTMAS! The strain was breaking. It couldn't last. Every hour became pregnant, every minute electrical. The Leyden-jar of time was crackling full of dynamic force, waiting only for the appointed hour to flash into glory and bright joy such as never is on land or sea for Grown-ups.

You knew, of course, that the tree, The Tree Itself, had secretly been brought in and stood up in the back parlor, its tip almost touching the plaster; but you didn't peek—not so much because you were bidden not to, as because you couldn't, wouldn't, violate that sacred presence. I suppose the worshiper of Isis might as easily have pulled aside the veil and sought to gaze upon—what?—The Mystery—the chief charm of which lay, after all, in its inviolability. That room and the bottom drawer, to which your mind perpetually reverts, both were hedged round with a divinity like that of the taboo viands of a Polynesian chief. Yes, you remember that once, once only, you *did* break faith. When They were all downstairs, at dinner, you did sneak, trembling, into Mother's room. You tiptoed toward the bureau, listening with big red ears lest They should hear and know your perfidy. Strong upon you lay the sense of treason and of sin; but you persisted. You reached the place; you seized the drawer-handles. That little un-oiled squeak filled you with sick terror. But you kept on your lawless way, unsanctified and deadly-criminal.

An inch you tugged open the drawer! With wide eyes you beheld a painted something—pink paper—ribbons! Then up surged strong revulsion. With a quick closing of the eyes, a turning away of the head, you shut the drawer and crept off. And dinner seemed to choke you. The shame, you felt, must cry

aloud to everybody around the table. Brother Paul's big eyes, inquisitively blue, especially struck terror. You resolved that if you only got through, this time, you'd never, *never*, NEVER snoop again.

III

I rather hesitate about trying to describe Christmas Eve. It's too big for my limited vocabulary. Wise, spectacled philologists tell us the English language contains some 400,000 words. Not enough, by half, to tell what Christmas means to an imaginative child—even after he's seen the slippers and the buffalo-robe. I suppose, however, I can make a feeble try at the job. So here goes.

On Christmas Eve, They had an early supper so as to get the work all done up and the dishes washed and such-like foolish, inconsequential, trivial incongruities attended to and out of the way. You were allowed to sit up till nine, which was in itself a rare and splendid treat, something almost wicked in its license. Right after supper They casually asked you to step down to the post-office to see if there were any more letters or packages. (Strange, how stupid Grown-ups are, as they move in their slow orbits and do and say so many dull, uninteresting, obvious things, believing, all the time, that Little Pitchers do not comprehend!) But you never "let on." You went, knowing full well the reason of that sending, knowing that when you should return, the tree would be all ready, glorious, radiant, transcendent.

So it befell, indeed. Sort of odd, was it not, that the reality always dropped just a bit, a teeny-weeny bit below the expectation? Oh yes, of course, it really did dazzle you, when the double doors were rolled back and when you (the cynosure of many seniors whose principal amusement very evidently lay in watching *how* happy you were) caught the first sight of that glory of green boughs, polychromatic candles, glittering things and knobby bundles. Of course, it made your heart pound con-



—Planché Fisher Wright—

An inch you tugged open the drawer

siderably, the sight of all those things hanging by twine: the candy cane, *de rigueur* always, the useful presents—done up with red ribbon and making a tremendous bluff at being Christmassy, as though shoes and shirts and pants ever could be Christmassy in spite of all the ribbon in the world!! And then the “Maud S.” bright crimson sled and the books and the wooden train down under the tree.

But after all, alas, it was kind of anticlimactic, too, and—human! there there! I guess I won’t expand that point at all. No use throwing any wet blankets

on the innocent joy of Parents while leading their offspring to the tree as to an altar of unconscious self-aggrandizement.

You always had to open some of your things, amid “Oh’s” and “Ah’s,” and exclamations of: “Now, I wonder what *that* is?” and “What? Another one for Dado?” before anybody else would touch any of theirs. Only then, when the first flush had passed, did They sandwich in some of their own gifts and then some more of yours, and so on, trying not to let anybody feel slighted or overlooked or left out in any way. Even good, old,

red-faced Mary, the cook, standing in the background, had to take her regulation yearly apron and dress-pattern and ten-cent bottle of Florida-water—this last, from you, clumsily tied with a pink string. Poor, patient Mary, where is she now? *Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?* Gone, together with all her aprons and her dresses, and her ten-cent bottles, and her works, too, quite gone, finished, vanished back into the Dark—save only as you flick them up for a brief moment, once more, on the screen of memory.

Somehow you felt a strange, inexplicable, shame-faced bashfulness as They poked and pried and fingered the bundles and made believe to wonder what was in them and who they came from and all that sort of thing. Because, really and truly, you knew they knew, and you penetrated the slipper-and-buffalo-robe quality even in *that*. You had a feeling hard to tell about, or even to understand. The false note in the chorus jarred your child-soul, little and half-formed and plastic as a nestling bird. But that wore off, what with the excitement of seeing your material goods and chattels rapidly mass up, while the floor littered itself with endless paper—much more paper than was necessary, you thought. Fact is, some of the very little things were done up and done up and *done* up till, huh! the present was nothing but a kind of nut-kernel in a tremendous shell! However, that “went,” too. Everything goes, Once a Year.

Thus, things sorted themselves out unto their rightful owners, and kisses were exchanged—some real good ones and some, from elderly visiting Aunts, that were after all nothing but moist pecks. And it was altogether wonderful and glad and sad and cosmic; and in your little heart swelled strange thoughts and feelings, unspoken, unspeakable, because the little brain as yet knew not the words whereby even to attempt translation.

“Now, Dado, don’t eat too much of that Christmas candy,” warned Mother, “or you’ll have one of your headaches to-morrow and spoil all the fun.” And, “Well, I guess that’s everything, now,”

said Sister. “Say, might’s well put these candles out,” suggested Brother, his voice broken and gruff, now high, now low. “They’re drippin’ on the carpet, looky! We c’n use ’em again to-morrow night if we save ’em.”

So the Tree grew dark, with puffs and little twisty spirals of ill-smelling smoke writhing up from the wicks. And you were somehow glad of that, too, glad to be let alone a little, for a while to run your wooden train with “Mexican Central” painted on the tender, back and forth across the carpet, glad to get a chance to investigate what made the wooden donkey kick. (Only a wire, after all; no magic!) Glad, when Mother said, “Now, Dado, bed-time. Don’t forget you’ve still got that stocking!”

IV

After you were all stowed and tucked into your crib, the one with the round wooden bars—and were stretched out in your canton-flannel nighty, and Mother had heard your “Now I Lay Me,” and had kissed you, then you cuddled the engine and the donkey in your arms and tried to think what the stocking would be like. For a while you couldn’t sleep at all, even after the lamp was carried out. Gas, in those days? Well, I should say not! The hum and murmur of voices, down-stairs, excited you considerably. The realization that The Day was close at hand, would positively be here now in just a few hours, banished sleepiness. Then, all at once, a voice was crying “Merry Christmas!” and up you sat in your cribby darkness, rubbing your eyes. Your heart gave a great big *e-normous* jump. You realized, you knew the truth: *It was Christmas morning!*

Do you remember that big, old, stuffed chair which rocked on a carved base, and had fringe and tassels about everywhere that fringe and tassels could by any ingenuity be made to adhere? It was covered with frayed stuff and it once had rocked upon your fingers just previous to a cataclysmic howling-spell. But for all its primeval ugliness and its vicious finger-pinching propensities, you



Of course it made your heart bound

loved it—for always to that chair and never, no, never to any other, was the stocking hung.

That stocking invariably was fastened with a safety-pin to the top of the chair, and fell in lumpy obesity down along the steep incline thereof. It loomed

huge, almost ominous, in the half-dark of winter morn. As you climbed out of bed and ran to it, thrilled again with even more poignant emotions than the night before, the Grown-ups just happened in, all dressed; and there were more of those obnoxious "Oh's" and

"Ah's." Dimly, below the big round toe where the annual orange lay, rammed fast down with charges of hard candy and with many, many things wrapped in paper that looked terribly like what had been already used for the presents on the tree, other parcels were stacked between the capacious arms of the old rocker. The hour that followed, as one by one the knobs were hauled out of the lankening hosiery, and as one by one the parcels yielded up their vitals, nary word of mine can picture. It was the *x* or *n* of human happiness, *voilà tout*. Why spoil it by descriptions fore-ordained, foredoomed to failure?

That was the climax. The expectation and attainment, those constituted the true joy. All the rest, that day and later—the actual cranching of the candy cane, the veritable playing with the wooden engine or the donkey or Maud S.—though pleasant enough, was nevertheless of this world, worldly, not much different from any usual play. With tangible possession, the superhuman, the mystic elements departed. What Nietzsche might perhaps have called the "over-bliss" could not endure. Whither did it fade? You knew not; you knew only that the Commonplace scone elbowed out the Dream.

V

There came a winter when Father no longer played with you, no longer told you stories or made you whistles, or, with any of his thousand fascinating ways, diverted you, but lay in bed, very pale and still, while the doctors came and went and everyone spoke in lowered tones. There came a Christmas when the house was still; when you were wakened in the night by Mother's voice, all choked and strange; when Mother bent over you and clasped you in her arms and tried to tell you something, but could not; when you felt her tears upon your face; when Terror gripped you.

Then you were lifted out of bed and carried off downstairs in the gloom. You could not understand. You only clung to

Mother, silent, shivering, while a vague and nameless fear clutched you as with talons.

They bore you to Father's room, and the fear grew upon you. The night-light burned lugubrious and dim. People were there. Wavering shadows rose and fell and danced along the walls. Everybody was crying. You saw Sister and Brother; and yet to you they seemed strange and far. An unusual dignity possessed them. They did not speak to you, hardly noticed you at all. Mary was there, also, crying like the rest. Only the doctor did not cry. And that, too, puzzled you. But you didn't cry either—you could not.

No, not even when they told you Father was gone, that he could never come back again to play with you or read to you or walk with you any more or hold you in his lap. You could not grasp such knowledge as reality. There must be (you knew) a big mistake about it, somewhere. Why, Father was the strongest man in the whole world, wasn't he? And the tallest? And knew the most of anybody? Could that huge man, who tossed you up so lightly in his arms, that stern yet loving man with the red beard, the hearty laugh, the little jokes and funny ways, go away off forever like anybody else? No, that was unthinkable!

With chattering teeth and shivering body, you stole like a little pink cotton-flannel ghost up the long dark stairs, padded quickly through the hall and so got back to bed again, somehow, there to lie and tremble and wonder, uncomprehending, till sleep, all-merciful, wiped for a while all grief away.

Christmas! Type of all human life, when once you understand. Precursor, with its slippers and its buffalo-robe, of that long, progressive, ever-accelerating process, the loosening of the bonds of faith, one by one, which for so many of us can never end till "bed-time."

Christmas! Image, in itself, of the whole story, of human life and human understanding. And who shall judge you, Christmas? Who, truly, save a child?



The Quarrelograph

GEORGE FITCH

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HORACE TAYLOR.

IT is possible to do almost anything by machinery in this tumultuously progressive age. The world has become accustomed to machines which grind out artificial daylight, belch forth complete newspapers in nine colors, and transmit messages a thousand miles in ten seconds for an exorbitant price. We are no longer amazed at intelligent mechanisms which make barrels, shoes, mince-pies, artificial eggs and false-teeth while we wait; which do our adding and subtracting for us; turn on the furnace at a hint from the thermometer, and play hide and seek with eagles, with nothing more substantial than a cloud bank to support them. In fact, I had at one time come to believe that nothing in the line of mechanical ingenuity and perfection could make me bat an eye. But that was before I investigated the virtues of the wonderful, two-phase, reciprocating, automatic, non-corroding, quarreling machine and trouble cannery which is now a permanent institution in our happy home.

I have used this machine for upwards of a year. Each month my wonder at it and my admiration for it swells and

grows. I am a better man and a happier one. I have increased in weight. I smile at the slightest provocation. My children are no longer afraid of me in the morning. Sometimes I wake at night and shudder at the mere thought of those unfortunate men who must struggle through an embittered and bursting existence, quarreling with their wives by hand.

Miranda, my wife, feels that way about it, too. But as a matter of fact, we always agree in the essentials. She is as enthusiastic over the quarreling machine as I am. It has meant as much to her as it has to me. It has been a priceless boon to a devoted but unhappy couple who a year ago were writhingly and helplessly harmonious and had found it not merely difficult but impossible to quarrel at all, even when nature demanded it in frenzied accents.

This fact, a year ago, was the only cloud on our married horizon. We had been husband and wife for six years. Never, I believe, has there been a more perfect wife than Miranda. From the day when she put her hand into mine and said bravely that a small income

wouldn't interfere in the slightest with our large day-dreams, she has devoted her hours and minutes to making me thankful for the night when I went patriotically to a charity ball and met her for the first time. She has been a bottomless well of tenderness and a towering mountain of faith. She has defied the world with her tiny fists to find my equal in anything, from chauffing a furnace to writing books. She has woven pain into smiles to keep me from worrying. She has raged and pushed behind me like a tiny tug-boat when I dawdled too long, stranded where ambition was shallow. She has paid me back a mint of happiness for the slightest service and a Golconda of smiles for the poorest cheerfulness. And when I tell her, as I often do, that she has managed to make herself a joy of a new kind for every new day, she will have it that it is only because I am good to her. She actually tries to make it out a virtue in me to try to totter feebly after her ineffable perfection. If I didn't, I should ask to be shot quickly and without much fuss for the benefit of the world at large, which would thereby be rid of the most unappreciative wretch who ever cumbered it.

Happiness! Why, I have been a regular British museum of all the happiness known to man. And Miranda insists that I haven't been as happy as she has—which is probably true, if she finds happiness in being nice. But there is always a price to pay for everything, and this was the price we paid. We could not quarrel.

Now, a quarrel in the ordinary knock-about "for-better-or-divorce" marriage is no serious matter. You tell your wife to shut up and she describes her opinion of a groveling coward who will speak thus to a woman who can't lick him for it, and one word leads to another and sometimes to a dinner-plate. But it blows over and in the end you are not much the worse for it. A coarse-fibered affection will stand the strain of a quarrel a day for years with little wear and tear, and down in certain circles you can mix up kisses and flatirons in the most incongruous way. But when it

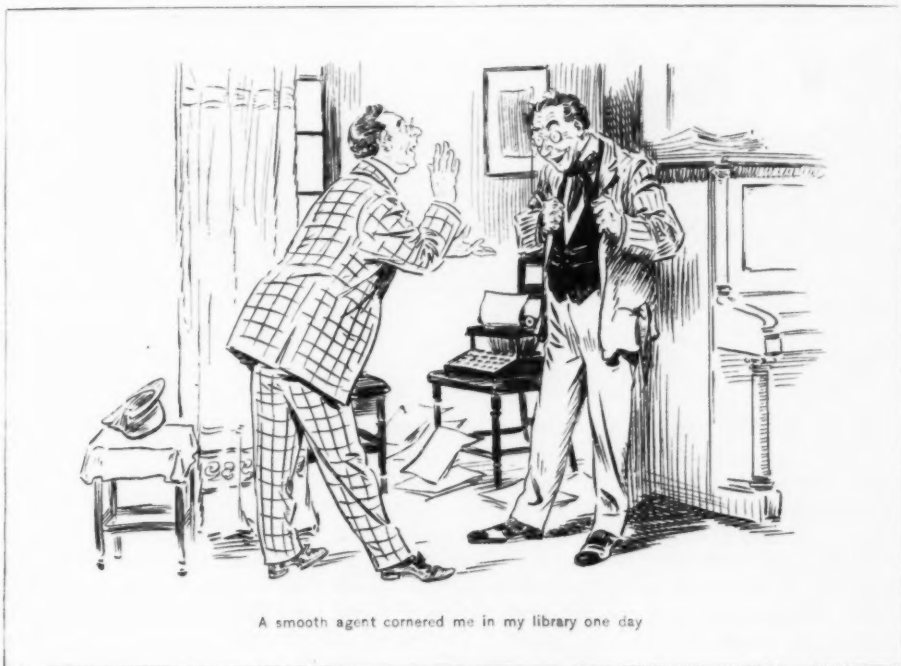
comes to quarreling—to speaking roughly and with intent to hurt, to a wife who has heaped you with tenderness as delicate as rose petals—a wife who will weep over your headache and smile at you while she is giving you a son—it simply can't be done. It would be like going after a morning-glory with a baseball bat. Married people as happy as we must struggle through the stresses of temper, usually relieved by a few jagged words with no relief.

Miranda and I had gone through the first year, which all expert married people had assured us was the critical period—the make-or-break time—without an outburst. I let the fact that Miranda had spent a whole evening writing to her relatives gnaw into my vitals without a quiver, and she bravely concealed the deadly knowledge that I had bought a ten-cent cigar while she was in the very act of giving up a new hat. All these little discoveries of masculine coarseness of soul and feminine indifference are very terrible during the first year, when you are watching and wondering whether the marriage will take or not, but the true Spartans keep their mouths closed and laugh about them the next year. We had grown to fit into each other's lives like old shoes, in the second and third years. Then the children had come and cares had sprung up like dandelions in June, and by the end of the sixth year we had discovered that if we didn't have a quarrel pretty quickly something was going to explode within both of us and rend us physically.

It wasn't because I was any the less dazzled by my good fortune in having Miranda near me all the time; and it wasn't because she was getting onto me in the least. She still was firmly convinced that I was a Greek god and a special unduplicated master model of American husband. And we were perfectly willing to explode into fireworks rather than break our record and kick in the lute. But that didn't alter the fact that I slept late in the morning and forgot to put things where they belonged, and that the meat bill was high, and the children asked the same questions an insanity-provoking number of times; or

that the summer was unusually hot; and that for me to argue over dry goods bills looked uncommonly like stinginess; and that a wife ought to take a suggestion without getting polite about it; and that a little system would prevent me from pacing the floor in the pangs of starvation at night while the cook dawdled and the wife spoiled the baby by sitting by it while it cried in bed—and a thousand

was as fond of records as any other American citizen and our friends, the Reardens, claimed to have gone seven years without slapping each other verbally. That interfered too. And so Miranda held in her bursting soul out of pure goodness and I held mine in out of fear and pride, and about two mornings out of the seven I kissed her good-by and went out of the house with a gay

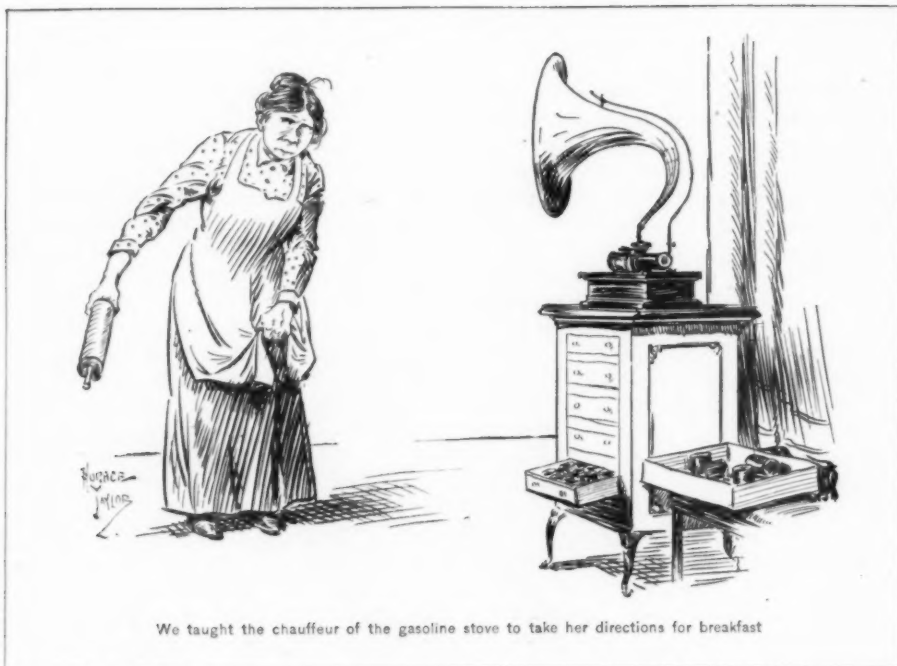


other little rasps of the sort that get into every household, particularly those which are trying to do their duty towards the census, were leaving us with raw spots which could only be healed by the balm of a row and a reconciliation.

And yet I couldn't bear, by any means, to start the cure. It was altogether too heroic. Not being familiar with quarrels, I was afraid of them. Miranda might die of the shock—and if she lived she might remember what I had said. And, besides, there was the record—six years without a single true word spoken in anger—which is, after all, a tolerably close definition of a family quarrel. I

wave of the hand and an accumulated grouch inside of me that spread a jaundiced yellow over the past, and the future, as far as I could see.

If I could only have taken Miranda aside once and told her all the little things she should have known—could have done it firmly and unanswerably, tears or no tears, quarrels welcomed and the best attention given—but no; the trouble with a quarrel is, you can't segregate it and confine it to its proper sphere. You start a quarrel about the lateness of breakfast and in spite of your utmost efforts it will wander away and spread out over the size of the meat bill, and the unreasonableness of wives



We taught the chauffeur of the gasoline stove to take her directions for breakfast

and the slavish lives of husbands, and the rude way you acted to the children yesterday, and the way she interferes with your discipline, and the great mistake you undoubtedly made when you married her, and her phenomenal silliness in getting worked up over a tiny little thing—and then—and then the deluge, of course.

I have always had a suspicion that it was really Solomon who built the ark and that he did it while preparing for a quarrel with six or nine hundred of his wives.

I have believed for a long time that there should be some method of quarreling in a healthy and constructive manner with a wife without interfering in the least with the process of loving her and cherishing her and being abnormally proud of her. Come to think of it, there has been very little improvement in family quarrels in the past 6,000 years. We don't argue with stone hammers any more, and, except in the best and worst circles, we don't drag our wives about by the hair, but a quarrel still

continues to spread over the whole domestic horizon, to upset every time-honored institution of regard and confidence, and to derail the true course of affection, for anywhere from a day to a week. It is strange that man has lived and invented so long without turning his attention to the family row and putting it on a double-track basis—eternal love and affection standing quietly and happily on one track while recriminations, low-browed adjectives and red-eyed riot thunder by safely on the other—but that brings me back to the fact that this has already been done, and that, thanks to Mr. Edison and your humble servant, man and womankind can now quarrel in perfect peace and happiness.

It was the phonograph which did it. I never had an idea of the wonders which could be accomplished by the phonograph, until a smooth agent cornered me in my own library one day and sold one to me. He sold it to me because I needed it in my literary work. A phonograph, he demonstrated by indisputable arithmetic, would increase my liter-

ary output 900 per cent. and leave me fresh at the end. Lying on the library couch, with a good cigar in one hand, or in one corner of my mouth, I could talk off into the faithful and ever-ready machine, stories, romances, essays and editorials at the uniform rate of 200 words a minute. Think of it! I could can literature at the rate of a story an hour at a cost of one cent per cylinder and a few vagrant dimes to the typewriter girl who would extract the stuff and put it on paper when I had turned off the literary geyser. The agent figured that an income of \$32,000 a year was not only possible to achieve but hard to escape. He assured me, as he took my order, that it would cost him more than his commission to buy my books during the next year as they tumbled from the press, and went away congratulating me upon my sure and certain fame.

I bought the phonograph, intending to glut the market with humor. But after I had dictated the first part of an incomparable burst of genius without put-

ting down the recording needle, and had spent an evening working out another masterpiece through the transmitter instead of the receiver, and had put two stories on another cylinder, to the sorrowful mutilation of both, I became slightly discouraged and dropped back to hand work. But I told a cylinder full of bed time stories for two-year old daughterkins and it was worth the price of the machine to hear her listen to them and to shout reprovingly to the thing: "N—no—not 'ittle brown bear—g-ate big bear. Say 'g-ate big bear,' Mister msheen"—dancing frantically in front of the phlegmatic, unheeding mechanism as it persisted in pouring forth the adventures of the wrong bear.

The machine-made stories had a great vogue and saved both Miranda and me from untimely paralysis of the vocal cords. Moreover, as the days went on, we found other uses for the phonograph. After some labor we taught the scornful chauffeur of the gasoline stove to come into the library early in the morning,



We went to the restaurant afterward

turn on the machine and take her directions for breakfast. We canned, with much labor and much spoiling of records, several yards of conversation from both four year old James and two year old Elinor. A friend who was an electrical genius succeeded in attaching the starting switch to the clock, and one evening at seven o'clock we put the children to bed by machinery. It was amazing and a little uncanny to hear the faithful machine pouring forth the following:

"*Rumorum-rum-rum-rum* time-for-bed childerkins. *Rumrumrumrumrum*. Time-for-bed-childerkins. *Rumrumrumrum*, James, put-down-your-engine-and-take-off-your-shoes. *Rumrumrumrum*. Elinor-let-James-unbutton-you. *Rumrumrumrumrumrumrumrum* James, remember-if-you're-not-in-bed-in-ten-minutes-you-can-only-have-one-waffle-in-the-morning. *Rumrumrumrumrumrum* Elinor-stand-still. *Rumrumrumrumrumrum* Stand-STILL-Elinor. *Rumrumrumrumrumrumrum* ELINOR! Are-you-a-little-girl-or-a-bad-little-colt-that-needs-a-halter? *Rumrumrumrumrumrum*."

Children are inured to almost any wonders nowadays, but this was too much for the victims. They fled howling to their mother's lap. But in a night or two they made a game of it and followed the record through with the greatest delight—particularly on the part of Elinor, who, when the words "Stand still, Elinor" came out, began a series of contortions which would have made the little colt seem truly dignified. We've pulled off an exhibition or two before our wondering neighbors with tolerable success. More than once, too, I came home and found long and minute directions from Miranda for the management of the home and the children until her return from the lair of the bridge-whist fiends. On the whole, we contrived to make the phonograph a pretty useful and immensely entertaining servant. I think at that time if I had met the sanguine agent who had led my \$85 away after his day-dreams I should have bought him a good cigar and discussed the matter with entire friendliness.

All this time, however, matters be-

tween Miranda and me were coming painfully to a head. In the morning I would go away hissing temper in a dozen places as a leaking boiler hisses steam, with Miranda valiantly keeping her temper and sidestepping my earnest efforts to start hostilities. In the evening, when tired Miranda met me, and suggested fretfully that if I had run a little harder perhaps I might have caught the car ahead, and saved her the trouble of hauling young James home uncounted blocks by the shoulders, I could have had red war for the mere asking, but I couldn't ask. Somehow, I couldn't see anything but the happy, laughing girl who had left her home a few years ago and had come with me—to weep and hear mean things. No, not yet. I'd postpone the luxury another day. If only I could have said "King's axe" in the good old way, could have taken Miranda out in the back yard and had one glorious bicker, and then could have begun where we left off—but, of course, it was impossible. And so we both kept ripping at the seams, and the dove of peace hung frantically to its perch with beak and claws and wings. Darn the bird anyway!

I came home late one evening, entirely ready for dinner, of which no signs were visible. It was the cook's day out; Miranda and the children were not home. The phonograph was standing where it always did when it had conversation to make and I turned it on.

"*Rumrumrumrumrumrum* I have taken the children out for a little walk. You left things so scattered in your room this morning that I am tired out from putting them away. *Rumrumrumrumrumrum*."

I turned the lever off and felt my cheek thoughtfully. Getting slapped by machinery was a new experience. Of course, the reason I left things lying around was because breakfast was so confoundedly late that I didn't have time to go upstairs and put them away when I had finished. Anyone with half an eye could see that. The house was run on shiftless lines. The girl did as she pleased. Miranda was always ninety minutes behind. I had waited upwards

of a million years for her since we had been married. Life was one long, weary, grinding wait and I would undoubtedly have to wait until eight o'clock for dinner that night.

That was what I had to say to Miranda. But to say it would constitute a quarrel, for she would undoubtedly have things to say back to me. A quarrel, of course, is when two people are saying things at the same time. Every morning Miranda frothed with suppressed replies, and every evening I bit off conversation that would have made tobasco taste like milk. But here was a phonograph sassing me. It wouldn't do any harm to answer a phonograph. If I were to spit out what I had to say, and go away until Miranda had heard it, and then come back, it wouldn't be a quarrel at all. If she got mad at it she could bite the machine. There is no rule against quarreling with a machine. I turned the receiver over and emptied my bursting soul onto the cylinder.

Then I went away.

I went down to the drug-store a block away and hung around for half an hour until I had seen Miranda and the children go into the house. I gave them plenty of time and then, armed with a box of candy, I tripped blithely into the kitchen.

"Hello, light of Asia and other five continents," said I, with a sixty-candle-power smile. "I'd pretty nearly given you up. Tired to-day? Where are the young rapsallions?"

Miranda looked at me doubtfully for something less than a second. Then she rose to the occasion. She is so intelligent that I think often she reads my thoughts before I think them myself.

"I'm feeling much better, boy," said she, "and dinner will be ready pretty soon. In the meanwhile you can go in and read the evening paper. I'll bet you had a hard day at the office."

I kissed her on the ear, which is a sign of particularly good humor, and went into the library. The phonograph was there, and there was no doubt but that it had been enjoyed and appreciated within the last ten minutes. There was a broken record on the floor. And there

was another in the machine. I braced myself, put on the especially private ear tubes and turned on the storm.

Phew! Was this the gentle and lovely Miranda with whom I had lived for six happy years? Were these poly-angled and multitudinously barbed words that buzzed about my ears and jabbed me in every vital spot actually a part of her vocabulary? I sat there in a state of paralysis while one cylinder full—1,600 words—according to the gentlemanly agent—of sarcasm, indignation, lofty scorn and shocked reproach came hurtling out. Then I removed that cylinder—I was in such a hurry that it also came away in pieces—and I indulged in the luxury of a good, long, comprehensive and corrosive retort.

I finished the last sentence with a perfect knockout—absolutely unanswerable—laid down the transmitter, and strode blissfully out into the dining-room.

We ate the most joyous dinner in weeks that night and tipped it off after the children were in bed with a trip down-town to the theatre. It was a little cross-section out of our honeymoon. We went to the restaurant afterward and I bought her things with the millionaire feeling people always have when they have just gotten engaged, or married, or have bought a bank—\$100 down—or have done some other fool financial stunt. I didn't have a thing left on my mind that night. It was all on the phonograph record. Apparently Miranda didn't have a thing left on her mind either. Presumably, it was all in my ear, but as a matter of fact it had gone out the other, for the retorts I had made were crushing. You don't hold it up against a person who has sassed you when you hand them back double measure.

We went home late, leaving a trail of laughs all the way down the street from the car.

"I'm tired, dearie," said I, "and I'm going right upstairs. You'd better come too." To tell the truth, I was a little bit nervous about that last record. It was pretty strong. But Miranda shook her head.

"No," she said, "I've got a little work down here and I don't want you clutter-

ing around either, boy. Go away, please."

Which I did and slept soundly and uneventfully through the night until the time when every author who is not in the \$1-a-word class must get up, and encourage the furnace to take up its daily burden. On the way back I stopped at the phonograph. The débris had been carefully swept up and everything was in order.

We are ten times as happy now as we ever were before—Miranda and I. She is a wife among ten million, and I am a man so favored by fortune in possessing her that I feel as if I should allow myself to interfere with the progress of a taxicab, or something, and acquire a broken bone or two just to temper my outrageous luck. The phonograph is a beloved member of our family. We quarrel into it perhaps once a month—not oftener—and our tempers have improved immeasurably. I am still pursuing a literary career, more or less

breathlessly, but the release from bondage is at hand; for within a year I shall insert in 1897 dailies, 987 weeklies, and all the leading monthly magazines, the following advertisement:

WHY QUARREL BY HAND?

It is unsatisfactory, old fashioned, dangerous and expensive.

By the old method you have to stop loving your wife when you quarrel with her. By the new you can have your quarrel out with your arm around her waist.

OUR NEW QUARRELOGRAPH

Makes the task ridiculously simple.

It is a neat and compact machine which will turn out a complete quarrel every twenty-four hours if necessary without damage to your wife's smile.

Five cents is the cost of an ample and vitriolic quarrel. Cheaper than dinner-plates and leaves no after effects.

Write now for circular and testimonials.

Bacon Dull: Love Active and Strong

BY HUGH S. FULLERTON

Author of "The Great American Game," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HERMAN C. WALL

THIRTY-SIX,' this morning," muttered Mr. Henry G. Lord to himself as he opened his *Morning Glory* at the breakfast table. "Thirty-six what? I wonder. Really clever, that idea of printing nothing but big, black numbers. Wonder what they mean, if anything beyond attracting attention. 'Twenty-nine' Monday, 'Seven' last Thursday, 'Fourteen' a week ago Monday."

Mr. Henry G. Lord knitted his brows, stared at the big "36" on the printed page spread before him, sipped his coffee and nibbled at his toast and marmalade.

"Fourteen, seven, twenty-nine, thirty-six; thirty-six, twenty-nine, seven. four-

teen," he repeated thoughtfully. "Bless me if I can make out what it is. Apparently some cipher. The whole town will be trying to guess what those numbers mean, and then they will find out it means use Smith's soap or Jones' tooth-paste. Confound it, why couldn't my advertising department have invented it? I'll jack Perkins up for failing to think of it."

With that virtuous determination against the unsuspecting Mr. Perkins, Mr. Henry G. Lord glanced over his letters, completed his breakfast hastily and prepared to depart.

"Good morning, papa," greeted Miss Mildred Lord, entering and dutifully



"Thirty-six this morning," muttered Henry G. Lord to himself

pecking her parent upon the forehead. "What is the number in the paper this morning, papa?"

"Thirty-six," responded Mr. Lord exasperatedly. "I was just telling myself every woman in town would be curious to know what those numbers mean. You have proved it, my dear. I shall certainly ascertain why Mr. Perkins failed to get that idea."

"Yes, papa," agreed Miss Lord meekly.

Mr. Henry G. Lord bestowed a pecking kiss upon the cheek of his lovely daughter, assumed his business expression, in which dignity and severity were commingled in equal proportions, and entering his limousine, rode away toward the office from which he directed the affairs of the Universal Food Products Company.

No sooner had Mr. Henry G. Lord departed from the breakfast room than Miss Mildred Lord seated herself at the table before her tray of toast, cocoa and marmalade and seized upon the aban-

doned copy of the *Morning Glory*. Instead of reading she turned quickly to the most surprising portion of the paper, far removed from the society gossip and the divorce-court news, and began to study the market page so earnestly that her cocoa remained untouched. Her red lips puckered into a thoughtful and most distracting rosebud and her soft brown eyes hardened into something faintly resembling her father's office expression; a serious little frown marred the smooth whiteness of her forehead, over which a vagrant curl of chestnut hair insisted upon straying.

"Janie," she asked sweetly, "did papa ask why there was no butter this morning?"

"No, Miss," said Janie. "I trembled all through breakfast for fear he would, but he ate the marmalade and did not notice."

"Never mind, maybe he will notice at dinner," answered Miss Lord, resuming her study of the markets.

"Pshaw," she said to herself vexedly,

"I wish they would print the market reports so one could understand them. I don't know whether it should be 52 or 19 to-morrow. I think I shall call up Wilfred and get the prices."

With which cryptic conversation, conducted very thoughtfully with herself, she deserted her cooling cocoa and sought the telephone.

Mr. Wilfred Tracy, Sec., as his name appeared on the minutes of the meetings of the Universal Food Products Company, occupied the dual position of secretary to Mr. Henry G. Lord, president of the corporation in question and of suitor for the hand of Miss Mildred Lord. That he was able to continue in both capacities was due chiefly to the fact that Mr. Henry G. Lord had dismissed him from the unsalaried post. Mr. Lord was blissfully ignorant of the fact that his firm and extraordinarily definite refusal to consider Mr. Tracy in the rôle of prospective son-in-law was being ignored by both the other interested parties. That anyone should have the temerity to oppose the will and the express desire of President Lord of the Universal Food Products Company never occurred to the mind of Mr. Henry G. Lord. His forbearance in retaining Mr. Wilfred Tracy as secretary he considered remarkable. That either his daughter or Mr. Tracy imagined his word was not the final one in the matter, he considered beyond belief. He had dismissed Mr. Tracy kindly. He had merely stated economic facts, the burden of which was that when Mr. Wilfred Tracy could support Miss Lord in the style to which she was accustomed he might renew his plea. That Mr. Tracy, at \$3,600 a year, still could dream of supporting Miss Lord in that style, he never imagined.

At the instant, however, that Mr. Henry G. Lord assumed his Universal Food Products expression and started for his office, Mr. Wilfred Tracy was already at his desk, working at a mass of figures totally unintelligible to anyone but himself. The sheet of paper upon which he was canceling, altering

and doing strange sums in subtraction, showed evidences of having been revised many times before, and the totals always footed up \$3,600. As a matter of fact Mr. Tracy was attempting, at that moment, to prove to his own satisfaction that \$3,600 a year would buy ten gowns at an average cost of \$135.00; fifteen hats, averaging \$32.40; shoes, accessories and mysteries sufficient to clothe and bedeck Miss Mildred Lord in the style to which she had been accustomed. A burning desire to re-open the subject forbidden by Mr. Henry G. Lord spurred him on.

Evidently Mr. Tracy was not pleased with the sums he was doing. In fact the only comfort possible for him to derive from the situation lay in the fact that the lady herself had submitted to him a budget of her expenses for the previous year. Mr. Tracy realized gloomily that, while the results of his calculations might convince himself, or possibly even Miss Lord, they were not yet in shape to present to Mr. Henry G. Lord. For although the figures proved conclusively that his salary would cover the cost of apparel, Mr. Lord might observe that such items as house rent, food, fuel and service had been inadvertently omitted.

Of his ability to clothe his bride, in the manner to which she had been accustomed, by reducing the budget one gown, and by judiciously reducing the average cost of the others, Mr. Tracy was certain. Indeed, he had succeeded in reducing the estimate furnished by the lady herself to a point where he would have \$136.45 of his salary as a surplus wherewith to supply other wants. He was wondering if two opera cloaks a year were vitally necessary, when the telephone bell rang.

"Hello, Will," said Miss Lord from the other end of the wire. "Yes, it is I—I have told you several times not to call me darling or pet over the telephone. —Yes, I do mean it. It is in bad taste, and besides the operator might be listening— Please do not attempt to argue the point over the telephone— Well, if you *must* know, I still do— Yes, I *always* shall. *Now* are you satisfied?"

"Is father there yet?—No—*Please* don't talk foolishness any more. I called you on a matter of business.—Yes, *business*. I want to know the retail prices of bacon and lard to-day—Yes, silly; bacon and lard—Yes, I am trying to learn to economize—Will Tracy, if you talk foolishness any more I'll not learn to economize. You know it is for you I'm doing it.

"Thirty cents a pound for bacon? Gracious, isn't that high? And lard twenty-two cents. Is that dreadfully high? I thought it was. What makes it so high?—Papa does, you say? Isn't that mean?

"No, I'm afraid I'm not doing very well. Papa says the household expenses are heavier since I have been managing, but I'm learning. Thank you very much. I'll call you up often about prices if you'll talk sense, at least over the 'phone—Yes, you may come Thursday evening. Good-by; I must economize."

Miss Lord smiled in a satisfied manner as she returned to the breakfast table, put the tip of her silver pencil to her rosebud lips and then wrote rapidly a list of names.

"Janie," she said presently, "you may bring me another cup of cocoa; this one is cold. And, Janie—bacon or lard?"

"Bacon, Miss Mildred," answered Janie quickly.

"That decides it," said Miss Lord, writing something below the list of names.

"What ought bacon to cost, Janie?"

"I don't know, Miss; we used to get it for 17 cents a pound years ago."

"We'd better make it eighteen then," sighed Miss Lord. "This economizing is such a nuisance. Call the boy, Janie."

And straightway Miss Lord opened the paper to the society column and resumed her breakfast.

By the time Mr. Henry G. Lord reached the innermost holy of holies of the Universal Food Products' twenty-seven story office building, his mixture of severity, dignity and peevishness might be represented in the chemical formula, S3, D2P. Utterly ignoring Mr. Wilfred

Tracy, who hastily concealed some figures, he pressed the button marked "Pub," and immediately Mr. Perkins, publicity manager of Universal Food Products, stood before him.

"Mr. Perkins," said Mr. Henry G. Lord, his chest tones dropping toward the vocal zero, "M. Perkins, why didn't you think of it?"

"Think of what, sir?" inquired Mr. Perkins soothingly, his tone an apology for not knowing what this great man thought.

"Why, the IDEA," said Mr. Henry G. Lord.

"What idea, sir?" inquired Mr. Perkins, even more soothingly conciliatory, as if he feared a jarring note might precipitate the gathering wrath of Mr. Henry G. Lord.

"What idea?" repeated Mr. Lord. "Mr. Perkins, you have the effrontery to ask what idea? Why, the only idea in town, sir! The ONLY idea!"

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Perkins. "Yes, sir, the ONLY IDEA—but may I ask what it is, sir?"

"Ask what it is? Ask what it is?" Mr. Henry G. Lord was amazed, dumfounded, but conquering his impatience with an effort acquired through years of association with inferior intellects, he proceeded, "I mean the figures running in the *Morning Glory*, sir. It's the best idea in years, the ONLY idea, sir, in advertising—and some one else has it! I tell you these independents are getting too smart for us. They have ideas, sir; IDEAS."

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Perkins.

Perkins would have replied "Yes, sir," if Mr. Henry G. Lord had told him it was a great idea to leap out of the window.

"Ideas," reiterated Mr. Henry G. Lord, "ideas are what we need, Mr. Perkins. Confound it, sir, I have secured control of everything else; and I want control of ideas, sir—IDEAS!"

"Yes, sir," repeated Mr. Perkins in a tone that indicated if Mr. Henry G. Lord wanted anything, he, Mr. Perkins, would get it for him.

"Now, what do those numbers mean



He merely stated economic facts, the burden of which was that when Mr. Tracy could support Miss Lord he might renew his plea

and whose advertisement is it?" demanded Mr. Lord in his two-above-zero chest notes.

"We do not know, sir," confessed Mr. Perkins weakly.

"Don't know! Don't KNOW?"

Mr. Henry G. Lord exploded. The idea of anyone in Universal Food Products not knowing anything that Mr. Henry G. Lord wanted to know was unprecedented, appalling, beyond comprehension. In two minutes he reduced Mr. Perkins to a figurative pulp by pounding him with language.

"We have tried to learn, sir," protested Mr. Perkins feebly. "The numbers are printed at the same moment in every big city in America. Each paper in which they appear has made a year's contract for five inches of space daily, paid in advance. They do not know what the figures mean or what concern is back of them. The contracts were made by individuals who, as far as we have been able to ascertain, are not connected with any concern in common."

Mr. Henry G. Lord listened worriedly and ceased blustering.

"Find out," he ordered curtly.

As Mr. Perkins escaped from the awful presence, Mr. Thomas, General Sales Manager, entered excitedly.

"What is it this morning, Mr. Thomas?" asked Mr. Henry G. Lord, with a trace of irritation in his voice.

"It's butter this morning, Mr. Lord," groaned Thomas, sinking into a chair and wiping his forehead feverishly, although the room was cold.

"Butter?" repeated Mr. Henry G. Lord. "Butter? Have they dared attack butter? Butter! The one product over which we thought we had absolute control. Butter? Impossible, sir; impossible! Universal Food controls 96 per cent. of the butter of the world, sir. No one can affect butter!"

"They can't, but they have," insisted Mr. Thomas, wiping his brow in nervous perplexity.

"Impossible," ejaculated Mr. Lord, precisely as if too much gasoline had run into his ignition chamber and exploded.

"Boston reports are coming in saying everyone in Boston quit buying butter this morning," recited Mr. Thomas. "No demand anywhere. New York was up to forty-six cents with brisk demand, yesterday. I ordered the price up to fifty cents this morning. Now they report no demand."

"It's some confounded conspiracy of the retailers against us," thundered Mr. Henry G. Lord.

"No, sir," contradicted Mr. Thomas, with a dodging motion. "Retailers ordered liberally at the increased price; now they are overstocked and canceling. It's early here, but already retailers are throwing back orders. Our investigators say no one is buying butter from the retailers."

"Butter? Impossible!" reiterated Mr. Lord. "Impossible! People can't eat without butter."

"They must be supplied, then," argued Mr. Thomas. "Every woman that comes into a store says 'No butter today.'"

"We must get after them," snapped Mr. Lord, precisely in the same tone Mr. Herod must have used when he ordered the massacre of the innocents. "Get after them strong. Find out who is doing this. It's a conspiracy to ruin us, sir! Ruin us!" Mr. Henry G. Lord concluded in a burst of righteous indignation.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Thomas. "Shall I order a cut in butter, sir?"

"Cut? No!" thundered Mr. Lord. "Hold butter steady. Send out reports that demand is firm and supplies light. We cut fourteen cents on lambs last week—two cents of which loss fell on us, sir; on us! And nine on sugar the week before—nine cents a hundred—and Universal Food Products had to stand a cent of that! We can't go on cutting forever."

"But no one would buy lamb or sugar until we did cut," insisted Mr. Thomas.

"Well, order the retailers to cut butter eight cents, then—and quote it half a cent lower to them," conceded Mr. Lord. "Half a cent dead loss, sir. Advance bacon a cent to the trade, lard

half a cent, and two cents on something else, I don't care what. We must not let the stockholders suffer!"

"No, sir," agreed Mr. Thomas, escaping hastily.

"Oh, papa," said Miss Lord to the sorely harassed and exasperated head of Universal Food at dinner that evening, "isn't it just lovely? I'm economizing ever so much in household expenses. I saved seventy cents on this lamb alone. It was fourteen cents a pound lower than it was last week."

"Yes, dear," responded Mr. Lord thoughtfully. He had not heard what she said, being immersed in thought and striving to discover why everyone in the United States had quit eating butter.

"Let Benton give you another bit of the lamb," urged Miss Lord.

"Benton," said Mr. Henry G. Lord, suddenly sitting very straight, "Benton, why isn't there butter?"

"There, papa dear," said Miss Lord; "I felt certain you would notice it. You see butter is *so* dear, I didn't buy any. Let Benton give you a little more of the lamb. It's delicious."

"Take it away. I don't care for lamb," replied Mr. Henry G. Lord in the nearest approach to his office voice he ever permitted himself at home.

"Don't you think I shall learn to manage so that Wilfred and I can live on his salary soon, papa?" asked the artless Miss Lord.

"If things keep on as they are doing, Wilfred won't have any salary," growled Mr. Lord enigmatically, and being a wise young woman who saw that the iron was at entirely too low a temperature, Miss Lord refrained from striking again.

"Bacon is frightfully high," she added artlessly. "I think it will be lower soon."

"Bacon lower?" Mr. Henry G. Lord's tone approached its Food Products' caliber. "Bacon lower? It will be higher—about six cents higher," he added, leaving the table without formality.

"I could have won a new hat from him if he had only remained a few min-

utes longer," sighed Miss Lord regretfully.

"Fifty-two—eighteen," muttered Mr. Henry G. Lord interestedly as he scanned the *Morning Glory* at breakfast the following morning. "Two numbers a day instead of one, eh? Evidently they are approaching the *dénouement*. We soon shall know what particular article this mysterious genius desires to sell. A very remarkable advertising campaign. I hope it is nothing that will come into competition with us. If it is, I suppose Universal Food will have to pay the cost of this advertising. Confound Perkins!"

He rode to his office in deep thought. Twice he signaled his chauffeur to stop at markets where proprietors bowed low before the man who controlled their destinies. He inquired briefly concerning the condition of the butter trade. "No demand, sir," both proprietors informed him. "Every household in this district seems overstocked on butter or using some substitute. Haven't had a dozen sales to-day. No one seems to want butter at any price."

The troubled frown on the brow of Mr. Henry G. Lord deepened and his chemical mixture was Vexation 3, Alarm 2, Anger 2, as he entered the stronghold of Universal Food Products.

"It's bacon to-day, sir," gasped Mr. Thomas, swabbing his bald head wildly.

"Bacon?" roared Mr. Henry G. Lord.

"Some demand for butter at the lowered prices," gasped Mr. Thomas, hoping to avert the impending storm, "but bacon has gone all to pieces. New York, Boston, Philadelphia, report no sales, no demand. Buffalo, Cleveland, Chicago, the same. Western reports indicate that it will extend over the entire country. Everyone has quit eating bacon."

"Bacon? Bacon?" repeated Mr. Henry G. Lord as if to make certain of his senses. "Quit eating bacon? The country must be going crazy!"

"It is—and I am," groaned Mr. Thomas, grammatically.

"Why—why—" stammered Mr. Henry G. Lord. "Why, come to think of it,



He inquired briefly concerning the condition of the butter trade

I didn't have my rasher of bacon at breakfast. First time in years I've missed having my bacon. Why didn't I have it, sir?"

"Didn't have your bacon?" repeated Mr. Thomas. "Neither did I."

"Why?" thundered Mr. Henry G. Lord.

"I don't know, sir; maybe it's just a coincidence."

"Eighty million coincidences? Eighty million devils!" roared Mr. Lord. "I want you to concentrate the entire investigating force of Universal Food Products—every man, every salesman. Find out why everyone quit eating butter yesterday. *Why* they quit eating bacon to-day. Find out why *I* quit eating bacon, sir."

Seldom had Mr. Henry G. Lord in his Napoleonic financial career been so excited. Chemical analysis would have shown fright, wonderment and anger in equal parts, with a trace of dignity.

Universal Food Products long had been railed against by pulpit, press and

people. Now some unknown force was striking at its very foundations. Mr. Henry G. Lord confessed that a force which could make every housekeeper in the United States quit eating butter and bacon could control the company that controlled the food and prices. Despite the valiant efforts of the trained men of Universal Food Products, not one reason for the strange cessation of demand could they find. Women slammed doors in their faces when they inquired humbly why they had not ordered bacon. Others told them it was none of their business, which was contrary to the truth.

Prices were slashed and driven down until bacon was offered almost at cost. Universal Products reluctantly cut to cost. Retailers offered bacon at wholesale prices. Still the people refused to eat bacon. On the morning of the fifth day the retail price of bacon reached 18 cents, and was quoted to the trade by Universal Food Products at 12. Instantly the retail supplies from New York

to San Francisco melted away and Universal Food Products' great trucks groaned under the weight of bacon *en route* to clamoring retailers. The baconless nation charged wildly upon the shops and bore away bacon by sides and strips.

For the first time in five days Mr. Henry G. Lord smiled, as he telegraphed an order for a horizontal increase of six cents the pound on bacon. His smile lasted an hour, when messages came showing the demand had ceased as suddenly as it had begun. Marketers turned sadly away from bacon laden counters, guessed they'd take pork chops instead, and angrily declined to state why.

"Mildred," said Mr. Henry G. Lord (Irritation 4, Annoyance 2, Curiosity 2) at breakfast on the morning of the sixth day.

"Yes, papa," replied Miss Lord, dutifully ceasing her careful examination of the innermost portion of the paper.

"Mildred," repeated Mr. Lord (I. 2, A. 2, C. 4), "Mildred, what are you reading?"

"The produce market report, papa."

"Mildred," (Severity 3, Curiosity 2, Irritation 1), "why?"

"Because, papa."

"Mildred," (Irritation 3, Anger, trace), "why have we ceased to have bacon for breakfast?"

"Bacon is too dear, papa," replied Miss Lord very sweetly. "You see I am economizing, and I was too late to get any at eighteen cents."

"Is that why all the people in the United States have quit eating bacon?" demanded Mr. Henry G. Lord, (Irritation 4, Anger 3, Alarm 2).

"Yes, papa," answered Miss Lord meekly.

"Who told them to quit and not eat bacon until it sold at eighteen cents?" thundered the exasperated and irate parent.

"I did, papa," answered Miss Lord, innocently studying the market page.

"You did?" (Astonishment 5, Anger 5).

"Yes, papa."

"Why?"

Mr. Henry G. Lord's sparker had missed twice and the explosive "why" showed his ignition cylinder was again filled with petrol. Never before had his thirteen inch gun "why" been discharged without wrecking its target. This time it missed entirely. Miss Lord continued to munch her macaroon unruffled.

"Well, you see, papa," she explained sweetly, "you said I would have to learn to economize and manage if I wanted to marry a poor man. Will's salary was *so* small and the cost of living was *so* high, I really had to do *something*—don't you see?"

"I see," responded Mr. Henry G. Lord in his three-below-zero chest tone.

"I see," he reiterated in a manner that would have presaged an office tornado—the deathly quiet before the storm.

"I see," he repeated again. "But how did you do it?"

"Well, you wouldn't pay Wilfred any more salary, papa, although really I think he deserves more for the work he does. And we just couldn't live on his salary, so I *just had* to reduce the cost of living."

"You just had to reduce the cost of living?" Mr. Henry G. Lord was apoplectic in his self restraint.

"Yes, papa."

"You just had to reduce—" Mr. Henry G. Lord choked until Benton grew alarmed.

"Is there anything the matter, papa?" asked Miss Lord anxiously.

"Oh, no. Nothing the matter." Mr. Henry G. Lord grew purple and gasped. "Nothing the matter, my dear. You just had to—Oh, Lord!—A glass of whisky, Benton."

Mr. Henry G. Lord regained his composure with the aid of the glass and decanter brought by the solicitous Benton.

"You just had to—" He came near throwing out his magneto, but steadied himself. "But how?"

Curiosity was overcoming other emotions.



And when he had left the house Miss Lord telephoned Mr. Tracy

"Why, you know, papa," continued Miss Lord, "I belong to several women's clubs. Usually they are pretty tiresome, but while I was trying to think how Wilfred and I—"

"Yes, Wilfred and you, my dear. Continue," said Mr. Henry G. Lord in the restrained tone used by the early martyrs when hot stakes were thrust upon them. "Continue, my dear."

"Why, you see, papa, I got the idea and I got all the clubs to vote for it in secret. You see, there are about 750,000 club women in America, papa, and mostly they are the persons who do the marketing. So I just had three million lists printed, with everything people eat printed on them, and each thing was numbered; do you understand?"

"I understand," replied Mr. Henry G. Lord, just as the early martyrs once remarked, "I refuse to recant."

"Then I got the General Federation of Woman's Clubs to indorse the idea, also secretly, and they made me the sole committee. We sent those lists to every woman's club in America and each club

member agreed to get two non club members, secretly, to agree that whenever a number was printed in the—"

"Those are the numbers that have been— Good Heavens, I thought it was an advertising scheme!"

"Yes, papa. You see, the clubs appropriated money and appointed one member in each city to arrange for printing the numbers in the papers, so all I had to do was to find out what was too high and send cipher telegrams to each committee woman."

"Was that all?" (Sarcasm 3, Anger 2, Admiration 2).

"Yes, papa. Please be patient; I'm trying to explain."

"I am patient, my dear," said Mr. Lord.

"So when I thought anything was too high I just wrote a cipher number and gave the telegraph boy the list of names to send it to, and the committee women had the number printed in the papers, and the next day all the women quit buying the article that corresponded with the number."

"Fourteen, Lamb; seven, Sugar; thirty-six, Butter; fifty-two, Bacon," groaned Mr. Henry G. Lord.

"Yes, papa; I didn't think you were so clever. Wasn't it a perfectly lovely idea?"

"Perfectly lovely," assented Mr. Henry G. Lord. "Benton, the decanter again, please."

"I've economized a whole lot," said Miss Lord proudly. "Seventy cents on lamb, a dollar forty on sugar, and nearly two dollars on butter. I bought a lot of that at 22 cents for fear I might have to do without it again. Meals aren't good without butter, do you think, papa?"

"No, dear," assented Mr. Lord, "meals are not good without butter."

"Saved \$3.40 and cost us over a million!" he groaned inwardly.

"What is high to-day, papa?" asked Miss Lord artlessly. "I really ought to send out something else that the women mustn't buy, and I can't make out this horrid old market page."

"How do you usually decide, my dear?" countered Mr. Lord, seeking further details.

"Why, I usually select four or five things that seem high to me and I say to Janie, 'Sugar, coffee, bacon, lard, butter,' and whichever Janie says real quick is IT."

"Yes, my dear, it *is* IT," agreed Mr. Lord.

"I think I shall send out turkeys to-day," added Miss Lord meditatively. "Let's see—turkeys are number 79."

"Turkeys are number 79?" repeated Mr. Lord hollowly.

"Yes, dear, and Janie says turkeys are awfully dear about Christmas time. So I really think we ought to reduce the price before Christmas, so everyone can afford them."

"Yes, dear," said Mr. Henry G. Lord, nearly collapsing.

"Then I think I'll send out number 79 to-morrow," added Miss Lord thoughtfully, "and mark it fourteen—no, twelve. You see, when I put a twelve after a 79 it means 'Don't buy turkeys until they are twelve cents a pound.'"

Twelve cents a pound is a reasonable price, isn't it, papa?"

"Yes, dear; twelve cents a pound is a very reasonable price—at Christmas time!" He added two explosive groans, and glanced toward the decanter.

"Don't you think, papa, that if I can reduce the price of living just a little bit more, just a teeny, weeny little bit more, Wilfred and I could manage to live on his salary?" teased Miss Lord wistfully.

"My darling," said Mr. Henry G. Lord (Pride, 4, Relief 4, Guile 5), "my darling, do you care so much for him?"

"Yes, papa,"—coily.

"Then," said Mr. Henry G. Lord (Guile 3, Regret, a trace), "I do not think it will be necessary for you and a—er—um—Wilfred to economize quite so closely. I have concluded, while we were talking, to increase a—er—um—Wilfred's salary to \$24,000 a year besides presenting you with a few shares of Universal Food Products stock, so you will not have to worry about expenses. He is a deserving young man and should be encouraged."

"Oh, you're a darling," said Miss Lord, hugging him rapturously and dabbing kisses upon his bald spot. "A dear, kind old bear of a papa. Then Wilfred and I will have all the money we need and I won't have to fuss over this horrid old cost of living! It's such a bother to have to study out prices."

"No, dear, I'll see that you and a—er—um—Wilfred never have to economize again," said Mr. Henry G. Lord virtuously, as he submitted to another smothering hug. And when he had left the house Miss Lord forthwith telephoned Mr. Tracy.

Quotations from the market report the following day:

Lambs, 15c @ 18c higher. Demand brisk, supplies light.

Sugar, 8¼c. Heavy sales.

Lard, 24c @ 26c. Brisk—active.

Butter, at grade, 47c @ 50c. Active and strong.

Bacon, 32c @ 34c. Brisk trade, heavy demand.

A Yellow Bowl

Another Story of Old Peterkin

BY EDWIN L. SABIN

MAYBE we at old Peterkin were low-down scamps—

As members of the body politic at old Peterkin 'Varsity—

Professor J. Addison Madison, of old Peterkin—

We of Hot Tamale Tau frat at old Peterkin—

That is how great writers always commence a story; see? Well, as I'm trying to say, as a starter, there were Biffy Robins and Granny Whitten and Spuds Wright and Dinky Mitchell and me—or I—of Hot Tamale Tau at old Peterkin; a yellow bowl of chicken-salad; Professor J. Addison Madison of the chair of Analytical Chemistry, likewise at old Peterkin; Smithie, the Medic near-doctor, and others who and which also ran; and out of this mess "by your gracious pleasure I will a round unvarnished tale deliver," *pro bono publico*.

It is rather hard to take up Professor J. Addison Madison first, and thus make us of Hot Tamale Tau wait. Hot Tamale Tau! You know all about the glorious frat of Hot Tamale Tau; of course, you do. In that case I suppose we can proceed to Professor J. A. M.—commonly yecept "Jimjams."

Our J. A. M. was five feet high, with a little russet beard on the professorial spike order, wide eyes framed in specs, and a step so long that when he struck his stride between boarding-house and Science building his coat-tails caught on the nail-heads of the walk. Being a young professor he knew much more than he could impart to his classes—but that aroused no envy among us. What he didn't know we knew, ourselves. Some of the four-eye co-eds. kow-towed to him, because he was a kind of chemical Yogi; but inasmuch as he was so fussy that he sneezed whenever a door

opened anywhere in town, and so orthodox that to mispronounce thiotoluidine, myosinogen, *et cet.*, reduced the culprit to the plane of intellectual and social nudity, we others maintained the stiff neck.

Now let us turn from this painful sub-topic and blissfully consider the head-line, old Peterkin and Hot Tamale Tau.

As said, there were Biffy and Granny and Spuds and Dinky and I, which covers the ground. Biffy's passion was neckties and mischief, Granny's was Blackstone and his girl's picture, Spud's was we, Dink's was us, mine was we-us; and we all had the glory of Hot Tamale Tau and the predatory instinct of a student at old Peterkin well rampant in our bosoms.

It just chanced that after a fatiguing day at botany and base-ballette (being in training with the Hot Tamale team) Spuds and I were wending through the cloudy gloaming, an avaricious hole within and likewise a mind revolving about either a nut sundae or a piece of fried mince-pie. You can always get fried mince-pie at Jake's Bon Ton. That is a beauty of old Peterkin, where no growing mother's boy or girl need do without nourishment *à la mode*. Isn't fried mince-pie, in April, fine for brain-fag? And thus incited had Spuds and I ventured forth, the price of pie if not of sundae in our pockets, the image of both in our souls.

Fortune favored the brave and presented herself as *domestica rara* (otherwise the servant-on-the-job) in a beam of light placing a large, yellow bowl upon a back-porch bench. Across a vacant lot we saw.

"Hist!" spoke Spuds.

"Wist?" spoke I.

"Ist," spoke Spuds.

And we halted and drooveled.

Anything edible and loose out of doors at old Peterkin is the property of the one who eats it. That, says Granny, is law; and he knew, because he had been taking law and other subjects and objects at Peterkin for three years, straight or crooked.

The *domestica rara* retired within, and darkness enveloped the porch, but not the bowl. Nay, not the bowl. It shone with a rich, yellow light that spelled chicken-salad. If ever a bowl looks like chicken-salad, creamy and oily and smooth and nutty, with celery in it, and mayonnaise dressing, and lots of white meat, a yellow bowl does. A yellow bowl carefully set, covered, on a back porch to cool, spells chicken-salad just as a negro treading a country road on an August night spells water-melon.

Funny, but all of a sudden the desire for fried mince-pie or nut sundae vanished from my breast, and a certain haunting sensation etherealized into chicken salad. That had been a narrow escape from a mistaken diagnosis, but the medicine of Hot Tamale Tau had proved too strong for the power of evil. Spuds was trembling beside me: We were twain strong men in the grip of a passion greater than any ever before encountered.

"Sh! Who lives there?" whispered Spuds.

"Sh! That's Jimjam's hang-out, isn't it?" whispered I.

"Let's keep moving, anyway," whispered Spuds.

Then I knew that two brothers' hearts beat as one. 'Nough said.

We kept moving—around into the alley. A tin can clattered; a barrel-hoop erected and cracked me on the knee; a cat jumped the fence; but warrior Peterkiniensis on the trail of chicken-salad never was deterred by such machinations of darkness. We resumed.

At the proper point for assault Spuds formed the storming party; I remained behind in a state of innocuous desuetude to create a diversion in the rear, if necessary. Not many fellows would have

trusted another in the J.A.M. closet, but we were sworn to fealty by the loving ties of Hot Tamale Tau.

Spuds stole forward—stole first, second, third, the ball, and home; for he returned hugging the bowl.

In the safe precincts of the alley we uncovered it—smelt, stuck each a finger in, tasted. And now you, gentle reader who has been anticipating an anti-climax in shape of suet or sour dough, may release thy close-pent breath. It was salad—salad à la poulet and probably au coq.

Huh! And we in our April madness had thought upon simple nut sundae and fried mince-pie! How feeble is human sub-consciousness until pricked to sentient pulsing life by the edict of the gods!

Spuds let me carry the bowl, and then I let him carry it. An Oh My Omicron, a Zeta Zip or Sigma Slug or Upsilon Whoopsilon or other pop-corn stand Greek would doubtless have sate right down in a corner of the alley and have gobbled, regardless of the aching voids at home. But true fraters on a foray, we, proudly, by circuitous paths, which betrayed us not, bore to the family eyrie the spoil of the Egyptian.

By a side-door we smuggled it into the frat house, and up to Spuds' and Dink's room.

The house was pretty well cleaned out, for this was Friday night, which meant fussers' night, to-morrow being Saturday. But Granny, who didn't fuss, having a girl back where he came from, and Biffy, who was still struggling to pick out a tie from his sixty-six, were present; and Dink had not been feeling especially fit. However, on the bed he brightened up when we let him look into the treasure-trove, and revived so as to take notice.

Now, one yellow bowl of chicken-salad is not much of a morsel for four hearty youths and a convalescent invalid. And this was very good chicken-salad. We ate to the further confounding of Jimjams.

Mellowed by the blessed influence of our contents we momentarily lolled (having nicely stowed the bowl, shiny

inside as outside, under the Spuds-Dink bed, such a place never being investigated by Honorable House-Boy); but the habitual diabolical idea glided into the Biffy facile mind.

"Come on," he bade.

"Where?"

"Down to Baconian."

"Why?"

"Because," explained Biffy, "Jimjams is on for a paper."

"Holy mackerel! I don't want to hear him!" appealed Spuds.

"No; but we can sit there in front of him and lick our chops, can't we?" retorted Biffy.

So we could! The idea stuck; the mental picture inspired. To eat Jimjams' chicken-salad, or that salad in which Jimjams, as star-boarder at the front of the back porch afore-mentioned, had proprietary interest or to which he was titular heir, and to attend upon him, licking our thievish chops while seemingly fascinated by his words, foisting upon him the fleshly in guise of the intellectual; tickled our Hot Tamale Tau-Peterkiniensis souls.

Granny wouldn't go; Dinky wouldn't go—*couldn't* go, he feared; but Biffy, Spuds and I went.

Baconian at Peterkin is just a scientific society for original remarks out of the encyclopedia, and is composed of faculty, and bald-heads, long-hairs and four-eyes, either post-graduates or else the deadly-earnest who join everything without an initiation fee. No sex barred from Baconian.

This was Baconian night for some, fusser night for most; but if, as Biffy had promised, Jimjams was on for a paper, then 'twas us to mingle with the some.

Our filing in like brands from the burning approaching the amen rail created a little excitement; but we were received with decorous civility and found seats in the back row.

The meeting had opened, and somebody was telling about something over which everybody was yawning. I feared to yawn, lest I should disclose the upper layer of chicken salad. However, when

the preachment upon the left hind claw of the prehistoric lobster was finished it was indeed the turn of little Professor J. A. M.!

Facing him, we three might insolently court his gaze, the while we inwardly champed upon the memory of the yellow bowl. There is a certain delirious sensation in thus at once defying and alluring. We were bravos—bold bad men from Borneo and the Bowery.

Jimjams' thesis was upon some long word, or other, like the first thesis had been. In due time he had accumulated so many long words that he couldn't hold them all, and over-flowed on the black-board. That is, he wrote there "hydrocarbon radicals," "iso-phenyl-ethylamine," "cadaverine," "putresceine," "penta-methylene-diamine," "tetra-methylene-diamine," "choline," "trimethyl-oxyethyl-ammonium-hydroxide," "neurine," "trimethyl-vinyl-ammonium-hydroxide." Huh! I never thought that I could do it; but there they are. And why? Listen.

This is a narrow world—oh, a very, very narrow world. Suddenly as we sat in bovine bliss we heard him enunciate a familiar sound—chicken-salad!

"I have been anxious to observe the accidental process and progress of this chemical change or metamorphosis," was saying Jimjams. "Fortunately at the place where I am boarding the chicken salad to-day assumed a satisfactorily suspicious appearance, from having been kept too long, or exposed improperly, or housed in a contaminating vessel; and by a test proof I obtained from it indications of ptomaines—fortunately, before any harmful effects upon the boarders. I have requested the—er—domestic to set the bowl aside, and by continuing my experiments I shall gain a good insight, I trust, into the deleterious combinations which produce upon the body cells what is known as ptomaine poisoning by, for instance," (and he pointed with his pointer), "'cadaverine,' or 'putresceine,' or the trimethyl-vinyl-ammonium-hydroxide of 'neurine.'"

Ow! I felt Biffy and Spuds turning pale. A ghastly tremor—a dizzy sinking

spell pervaded me and when I reached the surface again Biffy had vanished, Spuds was just tip-toeing out. Glares were directed at him; but in the midst of Jimjams' peroration I managed to adjust myself to the semi-perpendicular and tip-toed, me too, on serpentine, oscillating ccourse. I was ill, awfully ill.

Biffy and Spuds were supporting each other in the cool air of the steps outside the building.

"Cadaverine!" wheezed Spuds.

"Putresceine!" moaned Biffy.

"Trimethyl-vinyl-ammonium-hydroxide!" groaned I.

The hyphenated war-hoop rolled right out. 'Twas the climax of endeavor; but every word upon that black-board had been burned into our brains. All we needed was the mental shock.

"That's it. I choose Jocko's," wheezed Spuds. "There wasn't any taste. Those two others sound a bad taste."

"They're all poison," moaned Biffy. "Come on."

"Where?"

"Up to the house. We don't want to be found dead *here*! Some medic's liable to get us. They're always out looking for cats and things."

True. We staggered down, and away. Now Spuds groaned.

"Jiminy, but I feel funny. How does ptomaine, the kind that Jocko said, act?"

"All over," I answered.

"At last, or at first?" queried Biffy.

"Both." I didn't know, but I supposed. And that was playing safe.

"I've got a pain in my back," groaned Spuds.

"It's not in my back; it's my head," moaned Biffy. "Gee, how she aches!"

"It must attack the weakest point first, then," vouchsafed Spuds. "I hurt my back once, playing tennis."

His remark might have been innocent. In the stress of the moment Biffy waived rebuke.

"I'm wobbly in the knees, myself," I announced. And I was.

"Brace up, boys," besought Biff, hoarsely. "Keep going till we reach the house."

"What doctor?" quavered Spuds.

"Anyone we can get quick. But we don't want Jimjams to know."

"He'd feel like the dickens," said I.

"So would we," added Biff.

"No worse than I do now," moaned Spuds. "Oh, my back! My stomach, too."

"Must hurt like my head," groaned Biffy. "How are your legs, Jocko?"

"Growing numb. Let's keep going," I answered.

"Do you think Smithie would know what to do?" put in Spuds. "He ought to be up on antidotes."

Smithie was our Medic—a Junior Medic, now.

"We can try him. He might stave things off till the doctor came."

"And if we pull through we'll have Granny sue Jimjams for criminal negligence," proposed Biffy. "He'd no business exposing such stuff where passers-by could get at it."

"No," wheezed Spuds.

"No," agreed I.

"He ought to have had a sign on it, instead of putting it in a regular yellow bowl," declared Biffy.

"Wonder," spoke Spuds, "how Gran' and Dink are!"

Sure enough, there were two more! We had forgotten. But—

"Oh, my head! It's like a football stuck in a picket-fence," groaned Biff.

"Carpet-tacks in the stomach and a buck-saw back, for mine," moaned Spuds.

I tried to bear up without complaint, but I stumbled a little to signify that my leg paralysis was worse. And *my* head and back and stomach were beginning to feel queer, too!

Well, at last we could sight the frat-house, where upon their beds of pain would be writhing Dink and Granny. But no symptoms of excitement were visible; nor when, a pallid-visaged trio, we trailed into the hall, did any untoward sounds greet our anxious ears. Dink and Granny either were already dead, or else were suffering in silence.

No, not silence! Somebody was playing rag-time on the piano in the parlor,

and two fellows were having a cushion-fight with Mu Mu and Pie Pie cushions, in the den. These all were Freshmen, who wouldn't know any better, anyway; and now with simultaneous groans we let ourselves loose, and in a desperate spurt climbed the stairs for bed and emergency treatment. The three scandalous and sacrilegious Freshies who would make merry while Rome burned came on the jump.

"What's the matter?"

"Poison!" moaned Spuds.

"Ptomaines!" moaned Biff.

"Trimethyl-vinyl-ammonium-hydroxide!" moaned I. "Chicken-salad. Where's Smithie?"

With the three Freshies further exploring us we arrived on top. Dink was smoking a pipe and reading, his feet among the *pot pourri* of collars, pipes and hair-tonics on the dresser. He looked well—until the funeral procession hove up and at.

"What's the matter?"

"Poison!" groaned Spuds.

"Ptomaines!" groaned Biffy.

"Trimethyl-vinyl-ammonium-hydroxide!" groaned I. "In the salad. Where's Smithie?"

"Where's Smithie?" chorused the three idiotic Freshies.

Dink's face froze. His feet fell down, and his pipe fell out, and his front fell in. He pressed his hand to it.

"Great gosh!" he bubbled. "That's why I've been so sort of bum! I thought it was Spuds' tobacco. Get somebody! Get a doctor! Where's Smithie?"

"Where's Smithie?" echoed the three Freshies, opening and closing their fish-mouths.

Dink reeled to the bed, and dropped. Spuds joined him. Biff and I wobbled onward, the wailing Freshies in our rear.

Just beyond, across the hall, in his room Granny was writing his perennial and nightly letter to his girl. He scowled at us.

"Can't you fellows take your rough-house out on the lawn?" he berated. But noticing our pitiable guise, "What's the matter?" he asked.

"Poison!" gasped I.

"Ptomaines!" gasped Biff.

"Trimethyl-vinyl-ammonium-hydroxide!" gasped I. "In the—"

"—salad!" gasped Biff. "Where's Smithie?"

The three Freshies were blatting and running circles. We could hear their voices and feet.

With nerveless fingers Granny dropped his pen and made a big blot on the letter (but so strong is instinct that even in our mortal agony I knew it would stand for a kiss—probably the last kiss!) His face became ashen. Yes, his glasses dulled! He, likewise, placed a hand upon his front, exploratively.

"How do you—?" he faltered.

"Jimjams said so. He had it saved to experiment with."

"Criminal negligence, and manslaughter *inter alia* and *in puris naturalibus*," denounced Granny, a Law to the end and the ruling passion strong in death. He flopped upon the bed. "Get somebody! Can't you get somebody? I'm sick."

Jiminy Christmas! So were we! He needn't think that he had a monopoly. Biffy staggered forward and fell beside him, and I reached for the couch, which Granny had imported so as to have a display place for covers and throws and the other girl-stuff that kept the post-office cussing, and crawled over the mess.

But Granny didn't mind.

The three Freshies were wailing and running; down stairs a voice was fighting a "line busy" on the 'phone; Spuds and Dink were uttering sounds hideous to hear.

"For the love of Heaven, can't anybody do anything? Must we die in our prime?" complained Granny.

"O-o-o-o-o-h-huh!" grunted Biffy.

"Ug-gug-gug!" gurgled I.

"Hot mustard!" shouted one Freshie.

"White of egg!" shouted another.

"Coffee! Lots of strong coffee!" shouted the third.

"Doctor! Doctor!" and "Smithie! Where's Smithie?" welled from the ward of Spuds and Dink, across the hall.

At that moment the front door downstairs slammed in Smithie's usual style, and we heard the Smithie whistle, which would arcuse anybody from death because he always flatted.

The Freshies scampered pell-mell.

"Smithie!"

"What?"

"Quick! Come up!"

"I've been trying every doctor in town," explained the voice at the 'phone, much irritated, "and every blamed line's busy or else no one's at home."

"Bet you haven't tried the livery-stable," answered Smithie, the callous brute, the Medic inhuman, the—

"What the deuce is the matter?"

"Poison!" moaned Dink.

"Ptomaines!" moaned Granny.

"Trimethyl-vinyl-ammonium-hydroxide!" moaned I. "Chicken-salad."

Never have I witnessed any person take bad news so friendlily as Smithie the Medic. He pricked up his ears, and trotted in, to gaze at us three in Granny's room; then he trotted across the hall, to Dink's and Spuds' room; then he trotted back to us. The three Freshies followed, like trained pups.

"Er—what makes you have that impression?" Smithie queried.

"Impression, or expression?" demanded Gran.

"Impression, I said," retorted Smithie, smartly.

"Impression!" maundered Granny. "He asks us why we think we have it!"

"It's the salad. We ate Jimjams' salad—chicken-salad," groaned Biffy.

"He'd been saving it to experiment on—for ptomaines," groaned I.

"Wait. I'll have to look that up, then," bade Smithie. He rushed out. He suggested that men in the process of dissolution wait! But we lingered. Pretty soon he called:

"How do you spell it?"

"What?"

"That word; toe-main."

"With a pee-tee-o, you double-distilled essence of asininity!" shrieked Granny, enraged.

That was news to *me*—the first part of the remark, I mean.

"I was looking under 'tee,'" bellowed back Smithie.

We moaned. There was a shuffling sound, and here entered, on hands and knees, Dink and Spuds. They flopped flat and lay groveling.

"What's that blooming saw-my-leg-off doing?" panted Spuds.

"Studying a spelling lesson," wheezed Biff.

We all groaned. A door slammed below. But Smithie, reappearing, drew our attention.

"I found it," he announced, cheerfully. "We had it last year ('I wish you had it now!' interjected Dink) but I'd forgotten. It's a chemical poison produced by changes in the tissues of decaying and decomposing animal and vegetable matter."

"Oh, Lord!" moaned Biffy. "Is this Baconian or a morgue?"

Smithie ignored the protest.

"Headache?" he queried.

"Yes," said Biffy.

"Irk some sensation in abdomen or back?"

"Yes," said Spuds.

"Weakness of extremities?"

"Yes," said I.

"Clammy skin?"

"Uh huh," said Dink.

"Vertigo?"

"Right here," said Granny. And—"Oh, heck! Can't we have a doctor? If we can't have a doctor, get the coroner. I want to die decent."

"I'm a doctor—or I will be if they don't pluck me," rebuked Smithie, with dignity. "Any doctor would ask questions, wouldn't he? He's got to know where he's at. He can't go it blind. There's always plenty of time. Bring some of that salad, one of you boys."

"Aint any," answered the Freshies. "Bowl's as slick as a pumpkin."

We five all groaned. What a memory was revived!

"You ought to have saved some of that salad for the inquest," reproved Smithie. "Well, I guess this is a case for ipecac or castor-oil or the stomach-pump. Here—you sick fellows, catch hold of wrists and count pulses while

I'm gone. Don't be afraid. I'll be back in a minute."

"Where you going?"

"Just down to the lab."

"What for?"

"After a kit. Wont be gone long. You wait and be as comfortable as you can. It's a slow poison. Don't get rattled."

"Buster's out after a doctor," reported a breathless arrival.

"If you let another doctor monkey with you I drop the case," yelled back Smithie, hearing, and *en route* down the stairs. "Now, remember!"

He clumped on, followed by our unanimous execrations.

"He'll never be competent to treat a pet poodle!" said Spuds.

"Poodle!" gasped Dink. "He couldn't treat a corn."

Hasty feet sounded upon the steps outside, below, and the front door opened briskly and again slammed.

Our wail rose hoarsely:

"Doctor! Doctor!"

But it wasn't a doctor. It was Buster Brown.

"Taint poison," he panted. "What ails you fellows?"

"How do you know?"

"'Twasn't his salad. 'Twasn't Jim-jams' salad."

"How do you know?"

"Because I just met him, and he said so. He doesn't live there. He hasn't lived there this semester. He lives clear at the other end of town."

Amidst the silence of a grave, which wasn't but which had hovered very near, we sat up. One of the Freshies started in to giggle; and suddenly Granny gave a great howl and leap.

"Drop that!" he roared; for said Fresh was reading the letter—the letter with a blot on it—Granny's letter to Granny's girl!

Palmer's Painful Predicament

BY ELLIOTT FLOWER

Author of "The Guilty Man," etc.

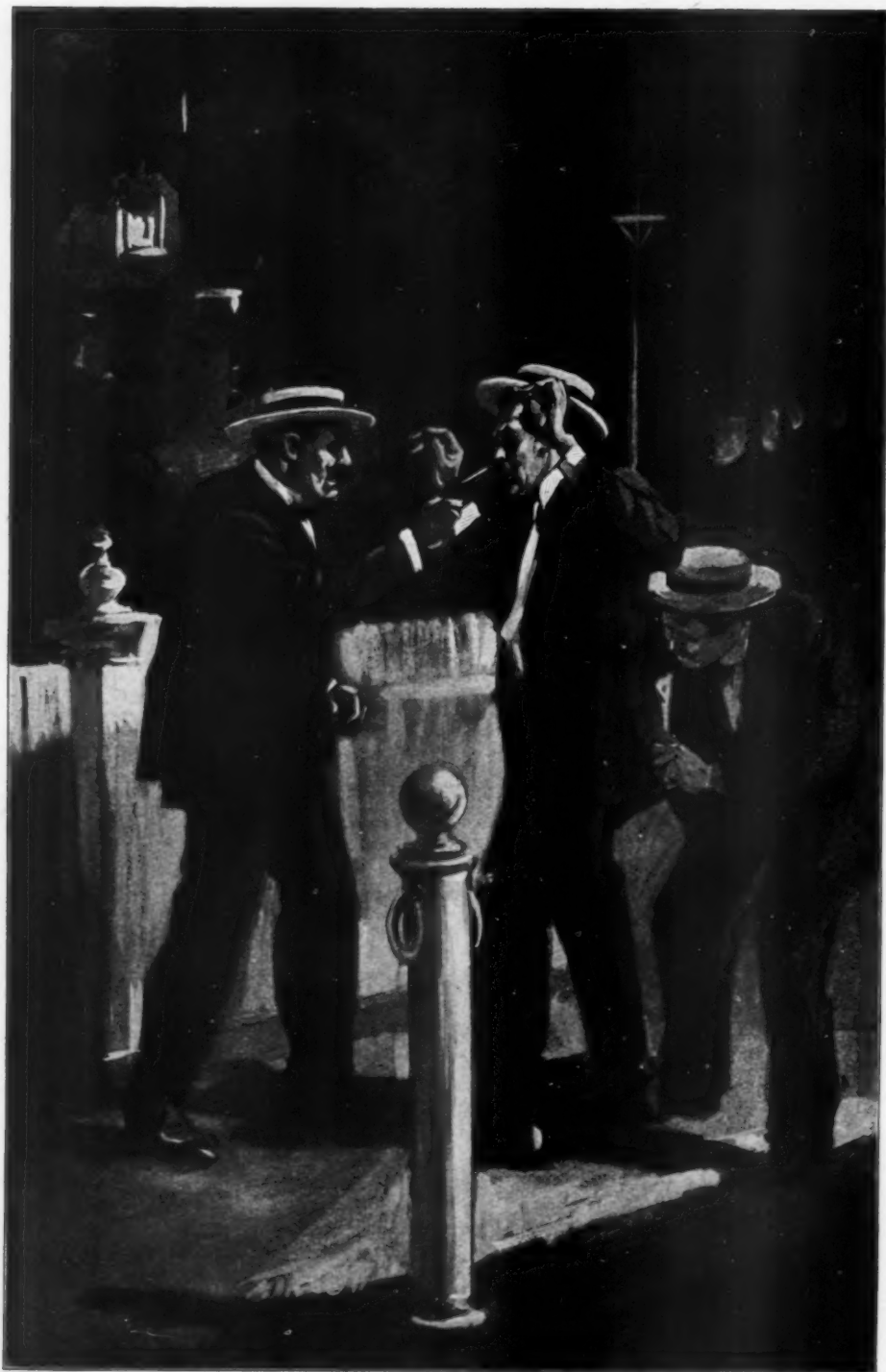
ILLUSTRATED BY IRMA DEREMEAUX

JACK PALMER, alighting from a suburban train at Mayfield, slipped quietly away in the dusk and started up a side street. He did not do this after the furtive manner of a malefactor who fears the police, but, just the same, he got away from the station lights very quickly and he avoided the main street. But he had not escaped from the station unobserved.

Two men followed. One had an ornate badge of police authority pinned to his vest and was no less a person than Dan Connor, Chief of Police of Mayfield. He wore no uniform, for Mayfield had not yet reached the dignity of uniformed police; the best it could do was to maintain a station with five patrolmen and a chief.

Accompanying Connor on this occasion was Tim Bant, who held no office whatever and spent most of his waking moments in Martin's cigar store, occasionally helping with the dice game when business was brisk. It may be said in passing, that Tim haunted the cigar store merely because Mayfield had no saloon. He was the kind of a youth who would have been found in a saloon, if Mayfield had had one, taking his pay for occasional service in beer, just as he now took it in cigars and cigarettes. He thought it a great honor to be allowed to take a smoke from stock now and then. From this it will be seen that he was not a man of large mental caliber or great industry.

"It's him, I tell you!" Tim was say-



Palmer found himself looking into the business end of a revolver

ing, as he and the chief trailed the unheeding Palmer. "I'd know him anywhere."

"Well, let's see what he's up to now," returned the chief.

Palmer finally stopped in front of a large, frame house and glanced up at the windows. His actions were, to say the least, suspicious, for he now kept in the darkest shadows. The chief waited for no more, but drew his revolver and cautiously approached, Tim following at a discreet distance.

"Hands up!" ordered the chief when he was within a few feet of his man.

Palmer turned quickly, found himself looking into the business end of a revolver, and promptly obeyed the order.

"I got you now!" gloated the chief.

"Yes, you've got me now," agreed Palmer. "What do you want—my watch and money?"

"Don't play off!" advised the chief. "I know who you are and what you come for. We played it pretty smooth, I guess—keepin' it dark and pretendin' we wasn't doin' anything about it, so 's you wouldn't be afraid to come back. But I didn't think you'd be goin' after the same house again. Didn't you think you got enough on the first haul?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," protested Palmer.

"Sure you don't," laughed the chief. "You boys never do, but you'll find out quick enough. Fan him for a gun, Tim."

Tim approached cautiously, passed his hands over Palmer's pockets, and reported that he was unarmed. Thereupon the chief permitted his prisoner to lower his hands. "Now, march!" ordered the chief. "And no monkey business or I'll pop you!"

"Where are we going?" asked Palmer.

"Police station," answered the chief.

"Oh," exclaimed Palmer, "you're a policeman, are you?"

"I'm the chief," was the proud reply. "Move along, now!"

Palmer again obeyed, the chief and Tim following a few steps behind. Palmer talked to them over his shoulder.

"What's the charge against me?" he asked.

"As if you didn't know!" snorted the chief.

"I don't," declared Palmer.

"I suppose you wasn't in Colonel Underwood's house a week ago last Tuesday," remarked the chief sarcastically.

"Who's Colonel Underwood and where's his house?" queried Palmer.

"Oh, come now, none of that!" exclaimed the chief. "You was standing in front of Colonel Underwood's house when I arrested you."

"Oh," said Palmer, "that's his house, is it?"

"Of course it's his house," asserted the chief. "I s'pose you wasn't in there a week ago Tuesday."

"No," replied Palmer, "certainly not."

"Why, I see you sneakin' out the back way," put in Tim. "I see you as plain as I ever saw anybody in my life, and I see you snoopin' around this town some other times, too."

"That's what made me think you'd come back if we lay low," explained the chief. "After sizin' up the town that way you wasn't goin' to quit with one haul, unless you got scared off. But I didn't think you'd go after the colonel again."

"Was his house robbed a week ago last Tuesday?" asked Palmer.

"Oh, quit that!" exclaimed the exasperated chief. "You know it was."

"They found there had been a sneak-thief in there right after I see you sneakin' out," said Tim.

"You done it pretty clever," asserted the chief, "but I got the lay of it mighty quick. The colonel wasn't home, and nobody was upstairs, so you went in over the porch and came out the back way. Scared off, likely."

"That's what!" put in Tim. "He was skulkin' along fast when I see him."

Palmer said no more, being busy with some very disturbing reflections.

At the station the chief asked his name.

"Noah Webster," he answered promptly, and the chief, having no knowledge of Noah and his great work, solemnly wrote it down.

Palmer made a brief effort to con-

vince the chief that he was making a mistake, but he was unable to produce any convincing facts, so he did the next best thing—that is, telephoned for a lawyer. As a matter of fact, the chief did the telephoning, but it was in accordance with Palmer's instructions.

The message went to Lucas Kirkham, a young lawyer who had gained a reputation for cleverness in handling difficult and awkward cases, and it was very blind. Kirkham, caught at his home, was merely informed that a man, whose name he could not recognize, wished to see him on a most important professional matter at the Mayfield police station as soon as he could get there, and that the aforesaid man would make it worth his while to respond to the summons.

"Sure he can make it worth while," grumbled the chief. "These here swell thieves have got money salted away everywhere. But no lawyer's goin' to get him off." And by way of making this a little more certain he sent Mike Cassidy, a patrolman, down to his cell to see if he was the man Mike had seen the same Tuesday night. Mike said he was.

Kirkham came. His first impulse was to ignore the anonymous summons, but it was still early in the evening and the mystery of the message aroused his curiosity.

"Who is it that wants to see me?" he asked when he arrived.

"Noah Webster," answered the chief.

"Noah Webster!" exclaimed the lawyer, keeping his face straight with difficulty.

"Sure," said the chief. "Know him?"

"I've heard of him," answered Kirkham gravely.

"Seems to me like I have, too," reflected the chief. "I wonder if he's in the rogues' gallery."

"I don't think so," replied Kirkham.

The chief courteously surrendered his private office to the lawyer for the purpose of a conference, and Palmer was brought up from his cell.

"Well, what's the trouble?" asked Kirkham as soon as they were alone.

"First, let me introduce myself," suggested Palmer.

"You don't need to," said Kirkham. "You're Jack Palmer. I know you by sight, although I believe we have never met before."

"And I know you by reputation," explained Palmer, "so I selected you for my attorney in this unfortunate business. You see, I'm charged with burglary."

"Burglary!" exclaimed Kirkham. "Jack Palmer charged with burglary! Oh, that's a joke!"

"Sounds like one," admitted Palmer, with a rueful smile, "but it's a pretty serious matter for me. Colonel Underwood's house was robbed a week ago last Tuesday evening, and one man claims to have seen me leaving the house by the back way, while another says he saw me on the street a little later."

"Well, can't you prove an alibi?" asked Kirkham.

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because I was in Colonel Underwood's house that evening and did leave by the back way."

Kirkham gave a low whistle. "That does make a difference," he admitted. "Still, the problem is not so difficult. Disclose your identity, which I will verify, and they'll kick their witnesses into the street and apologize all over the station for their mistake. No one is going to accuse Jack Palmer of burglary."

"But I can't do that," objected Palmer.

"Why not?"

Palmer drew a long breath. "Oh, well, here goes for the whole story," he said. "I'm engaged to be married to Mildred Underwood, only her father doesn't know it. If he did, he'd see red, mount Gatling guns on the roof and surround the house with wire entanglements or else ship her off to Europe under the guardianship of two austere aunts. I don't think he likes me. Somehow, when an old gentleman shatters a plate-glass window with his cane while making a pass at me with it, I get the impression that I am *persona non grata*. But not with Mildred. He may think he can pick out a better son-in-law, but she doesn't, and we're planning an elope-



Kirkham and Palmer sat late in the former's library

ment. Meanwhile, we've been meeting clandestinely. Get the idea now? This thief and I were probably there at the same time, only I was in the library with Mildred and he was ransacking the rooms upstairs. He made his get-away first. I lingered too long and finally slipped out the back way just as the colonel was coming in the front. That's what makes it so infernally awkward. If I disclose my identity he'll be wise in a minute, and then off goes Mildred to Paris or somewhere. I've got to get out of this some other way—and before I'm recognized, too."

"Well," decided Kirkham, after a moment of thought, "the first thing to be done is to get you away from here. I'll see what I can do about that."

He went out to the desk, and, after a brief talk with the chief, became busy with the telephone. A few minutes later he returned with the information that he

had arranged for Palmer's release on bail. "I happen to know the police magistrate," he explained. "He nearly had a fit when I told him Noah Webster was locked up here—said he thought Noah was dead—but he agreed to accept me as security for your appearance day after to-morrow. Promised not to call the case until then. I've got to have a little time to arrange matters."

Kirkham and Palmer sat late in the former's library that night. Kirkham was evolving a plan of procedure, and the task called for an exact knowledge of Palmer's movements.

"Tuesday of last week was the tenth," he said. "Now set your mind to work and tell me what you did the evening before and the evening after and also just before you went out to Mayfield and just after you came back. Perhaps you can do it better if you begin with

Monday morning and go through to Wednesday night. Monday, the first day of the week, is a starting point that you can get a grip on, and it's easier to follow along in order from that than it is to say where you were and what you were doing at this or that particular time. Now, go ahead."

Palmer had a little trouble getting started, but he ran through the first day easily after that, one thing reminding of another, so that he was able to give a very complete *resumé* of his movements. He was in the stock brokerage business with his father and had spent most of his time in the office. Kirkham gave little heed until evening was reached.

"I was at the club for an hour or so about six o'clock," Palmer reported, "and I met—"

"Pass that up," Kirkham interrupted. "Too many friends and acquaintances there to be handled. Date and time-stamp on your checks, too. Where did you go from the club?"

"Gaiety Theatre," answered Palmer. "Alone?"

"Yes. I had an appointment with Tom Stanton, but he didn't show up."

"Box-office man know you?" persisted Kirkham.

"Door man does. I'm on the free-list there, so I just nodded to him and walked in. Only stayed an act, though."

Kirkham made a note of this. "And then?" he queried.

"Dropped into Mack's for a drink."

"Anybody with you there?"

"Met several and had several drinks."

"Pass it up. Too easy to remember."

"Say! what are you driving at?" demanded Palmer.

"Never mind," returned Kirkham. "What next?"

"Went to Mantler's for an order of frogs' legs. Rather fond of them, you know, and I'd only had a light supper at the club. I was alone there."

"Waiter?"

"Henry."

"Know you?"

"I've given him about a million dollars in tips. Always get his table at Mantler's when I can."

"Good enough!"

Thus the examination went on, Palmer's memory being taxed to secure even the most minute details, and the net result, after eliminating the many items that Kirkham considered unserviceable, was this schedule:

Monday Evening:

8:15—Gaiety Theater; Frank Jones, door man.

9:30—Mantler's restaurant; Henry, waiter.

10:45—Brunson's buffet; Brunson, bartender.

Tuesday Evening:

7:15 (just before leaving for Mayfield)—Mantler's restaurant; Henry, waiter.

11:15 (just after returning from Mayfield)—Potter's café; Jim Casey, bartender.

Wednesday Evening:

8:30—Hotel Monroe, to ask for Mr. Montgomery of Boston, who was not in. Harry Jordan, clerk. Chatted a few minutes with Miss Ryan at the cigar stand.

9:45—Carter House flower stand, Miss Jackson, attendant.

10:30—Carter House grill room; Sam, waiter; Miss Catlin, cashier.

These are only the major facts; in addition, Kirkham had many details as to what Palmer ate and drank and did in each place. "They all help," he explained, "and the task is the easier because you were so much alone. It's difficult to handle a party in an affair of this kind. I'll see what I can do with what I have, and we'll lunch together to-morrow at one o'clock."

The next morning, as soon as he had run through his mail and attended to the most important letters, Kirkham took a taxicab and set out on his rounds. He got hold of Henry, the waiter, first.

"You know Mr. Jack Palmer, don't you?" he asked.

"Yes, indeed—comes here often—always sits at my table," answered Henry.

"Do you remember seeing him in here the evening of Tuesday the tenth?" was Kirkham's next question.

"Tuesday the tenth?" reflected Henry. "Let me see! That was—"

"Last week Tuesday," prompted Kirkham.

"Last week Tuesday?" repeated Henry. "Yes, it seems to me—"

"Ordered frogs' legs, I believe."

"Yes, yes, yes!" exclaimed Henry. "Now I remember. Sure he was in here Tuesday."

"Made a kick about the order, didn't he?"

"That's what he did," admitted Henry. "The legs were pretty small, 'cause the best ones had been served earlier. Must have been close to ten o'clock when he was in."

"You're quite sure of that?"

"Oh, yes, quite sure."

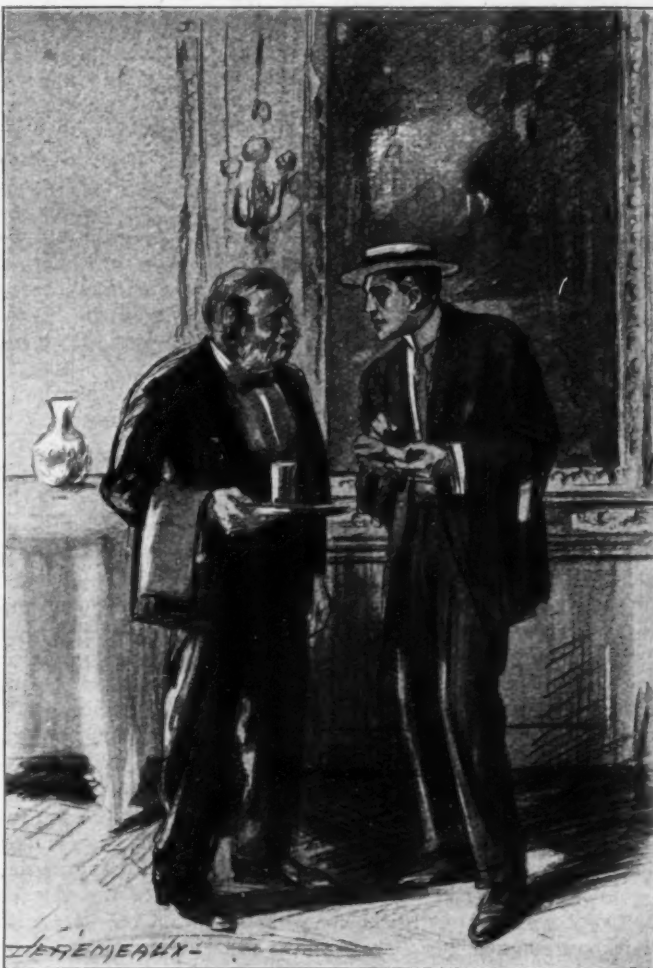
Henry was perfectly honest in the matter, but the power of suggestion is strong and that little mention of frogs' legs had turned his attention to the question of time rather than that of date. The incidents of Monday night were thus transferred to Tuesday, on which day Palmer had also been in Mantler's but at an earlier hour.

"Well, if you're sure—I want you to think it over and be quite sure—you may be able to do Mr. Palmer a good turn," explained Kirkham. "I'll let you know later."

Thus, with varying success, he went through his list and was ready to report when Palmer joined him for luncheon. "We'll have the finest little alibi there ever was!" he then declared.

"Alibi!" exclaimed Palmer. "Why—"

"Oh, not a manufactured alibi—nothing so crude as that," Kirkham explained. "No one is going to do any lying—at least, not consciously. They'll



"You know Mr. Jack Palmer, don't you?" he asked

tell just what they think they know, and they won't know they're going to tell it until the time comes. No use making it look so serious that they'll puzzle and worry and try to verify their memories; just let them think it a rather trivial matter until the auto. calls."

"The auto.!"

"Of course. We'll run them out to Mayfield in auto's. I've arranged for all that, and, wherever necessary, I've arranged with their employers to let them off for such time as we may need them."

"But I don't see—"

"I presume not, but you will."

The Mayfield police court had adjourned for the day, and Justice Co-burn, his chair tilted back against the wall, was idly listening to a conference between the chief and Prosecuting Attorney Peck.

"Then," said Peck, "the only evidence you have is that Tim Brant, who doesn't know enough to shovel sand with a scoop, saw him leaving the house and Mike Cassidy saw him a little later near the depot. You didn't find any stolen goods on him, did you?"

"Of course not," answered the chief. "No one stopped him the time he made the haul, and when we arrested him last night it was before he got into the house at all. But he's been hangin' about here a good deal of late. Tim says he see him several times."

"Well, you haven't got much of a case," declared Peck. "Tim's your only real witness, and he's a hare-brained lunatic who'd meet a pig in an alley and think he'd seen a rhinoceros. Still, it may be enough to hold him on until we can look into the matter a little. No one in the colonel's house saw him, of course."

"No one," admitted the chief.

The prosecuting attorney shook his head dubiously.

"It don't make much difference, anyway," grumbled the chief. "He aint a-goin' to come back."

"Don't worry," put in the magistrate. "Kirkham signed his bond, and he'll produce him. I know Kirkham—clever and up to all the tricks of his profession, but a man of his word."

Justification of this faith came almost immediately, for an automobile, bearing Kirkham, Palmer, the chauffeur and two other men, whizzed up to the station. The two other men were Henry, the waiter, and Jones, the Gaiety door man, and it had been carefully explained to them, as to all the others, that Palmer, to avoid the probable newspaper notoriety had given an assumed name.

Kirkham nodded to the chief and greeted the magistrate familiarly. "This is my client, Mr. Webster," he explained.

"How are you, Noah!" said the justice gravely. "You're a younger man than I thought. Let me introduce you to the gentleman who will have the pleasure of prosecuting you to-morrow. Mr. Peck, Noah Webster. You have probably heard of him."

"He has been of great assistance to me on many occasions," returned the prosecuting attorney, "although I rather favor Mr. Worcester."

Palmer's face was very red, but he ignored the banter.

"And Mr. Kirkham," added the justice.

"I've heard of Mr. Kirkham," said the prosecuting attorney, offering his hand.

"I'm glad to find you here," said Kirkham. "This charge against Mr. Webster is quite absurd—oh, much more ridiculous than you realize—but there are personal reasons why it would be extremely embarrassing to him to have to appear in a police court at this time."

"Most people find that embarrassing," commented the justice, dryly.

"Furthermore," pursued Kirkham, "he has an important business matter on in the morning."

"Revising his dictionary, perhaps," commented the justice.

Kirkham glared at him but otherwise ignored the banter. "I hope to convince you of the absurdity of the charge," he went on. "Now, here is Henry, a waiter at Mantler's. By the way, Henry, what's your other name?"

"Getz," replied Henry.

"Henry Getz, Mr. Peck," Kirkham continued, "and he will tell you that Mr. Webster was in Mantler's the evening of this robbery—the tenth. Is not that so, Henry?"

"Sure he was there," asserted Henry. "Ordered frogs' legs and kicked—"

"What time?" interrupted the prosecuting attorney.

"Oh, I should say from about half-past nine to ten o'clock," replied Henry. "I couldn't be sure of the exact time, but it was somewhere near ten."

"And here is Mr. Frank Jones, door man at the Gaiety," Kirkham went on hastily, as he heard another automobile

chugging up. "He'll tell you that Mr. Webster was at the Gaiety for an act the same evening. Wasn't he, Mr. Jones?"

Jones nodded. "I passed him in a little after eight," he explained. "He's on the free list."

Another party was entering now, and Kirkham brought forward the leader before the prosecuting attorney could frame a question. "Carl Brunson of Brunson's café," he said, "saw my client in there about a quarter to eleven on the evening of the tenth. That is a fact, is it not, Mr. Brunson?"

"Well, it may have been a little earlier or a little later," answered Brunson, "but he was there all right. I served him a Scotch highball myself."

"But see here—" began the prosecuting attorney.

"One moment," interrupted Kirkham. "Let me finish, and then we'll be glad to answer any questions. Mr. Casey—James Casey, bartender at Potter's buffet—will tell you he was in there the evening of this robbery—"

"Must have been thirsty that evening," murmured the justice.

Kirkham glared again, but merely asked, "Am I right, Mr. Casey?"

"It's a cinch bet," declared Casey. "He was in a bit after eleven o'clock."

"Back up!" objected Brunson. "He couldn't have got from my place to yours in that time."

"Probably a little mistake as to the hour in both cases," put in Kirkham quickly. "One never can be altogether accurate in those minor details."

Another automobile had rolled up, and three young women were entering as Kirkham turned to the last of the men. "Mr. Jordan, clerk at the Hotel Monroe," he explained, "also saw him that evening, and Miss Ryan chatted with him a few minutes at the cigar-stand. That is correct, is it not?"

Jordan and Miss Ryan nodded.

"About what time?"

"Half-past eight or a quarter to nine," answered Jordan, and Miss Ryan nodded again.

"Hold on, there!" exclaimed Jones. "He was in the theatre at that time."

"Perhaps Noah has a double," suggested the justice.

The prosecuting attorney, however, was becoming impatient. He found the affair confusing, and a lawyer does not like to be confused. "Anybody else see him that evening?" he asked.

"Why, yes," replied Kirkham. "Miss Jackson, who has charge of the Carter House flower stand, chatted with him a few minutes about a quarter to ten, and Miss Catlin, cashier of the Carter House grill room, saw him in there about thirty."

Both of the young women nodded, but Henry and Brunson immediately made verbal protest, the former holding that he was in Mantler's when Miss Jackson said he was talking to her, and the latter insisting that he was busy with a highball when Miss Catlin said he was paying a check in the grill room.

The prosecuting attorney turned wearily to the justice. "What do you think of that?" he asked.

"Noah, the hungry man!" commented the justice. "I think you'd better search him for wings."

"Oh, there are bound to be discrepancies in a case like this," argued Kirkham. "No one can go back ten days or more and be sure of the exact time that he saw a certain person, when there was nothing in particular to fix it in the memory. The point is, as I think I have proved, that Mr. Webster was in the city that evening and could not have been in Mayfield."

The prosecuting attorney looked at the array of witnesses and was more troubled than ever. It was unbelievable that so many disinterested people would lie deliberately in an affair of this kind. Especially was it unbelievable that the three young women would be parties to such a brazen conspiracy as this must be if the facts were not substantially as they gave them.

"If we were trying to frame up something," suggested Kirkham, "there would be no inconsistencies. The manufactured story is the smooth one; it's when people are trying to tell the truth that they differ on minor points. Memories are faulty in matters of detail, and



He had discovered the Colonel and his daughter at the back of the room

it is only when a story is carefully prepared and rehearsed that all accounts exactly dovetail."

That was true, too. The wise lawyer and the wise judge are always suspicious when several witnesses tell stories that are identical or that connect perfectly with each other, but this case seemed to go a little too far to the other extreme, and the resulting confusion was exasperating to the prosecuting attorney.

"What do you think of it, Judge?" he asked.

"It's not up to me to do anything yet," replied the justice indifferently. "The case is not before me."

"No, by thunder!" exclaimed the pros-

ecuting attorney, driven to desperation. "And it won't be before you, either! Here, Dan!"—to the chief—"send somebody to tell that inspired idiot, Tim Bant, to take a running jump into the deep water! If anybody thinks I'm going to buck up against a Chinese puzzle and eight or ten witnesses with no one but Tim back of me, he's got another guess coming. The case will be dismissed! I won't go into court with it!"

"If so," insinuated Kirkham, "I presume it will be unnecessary for Mr. Webster to appear."

"I never want to see him again!" declared the prosecuting attorney. "He's got too much appetite for anything but a museum."

"Noah," murmured the justice, "if I didn't know you were Noah I'd think you

you were somebody else but, anyway, a man of your erudition and experience ought not to permit himself—"

He stopped, for Palmer was not listening, his mind being otherwise occupied—very much occupied. He had just discovered the colonel and his daughter at the back of the room. The colonel was scowling fiercely, while his daughter was a picture of amazement and dismay.

"It's all off now," groaned Palmer.

"What's the matter?" asked Kirkham.

"The colonel has heard and drawn his own conclusions," answered Palmer, "and it's a cinch that Mildred has unwittingly verified them. If not, he'll get the story out of her anyway."

"Oh!" exclaimed Kirkham. "That's Colonel Underwood, is it? Well, I'll have to have a word with him. Might as well finish the job while I'm at it."

The colonel had reached the sidewalk when Kirkham overtook him.

"One moment, Colonel," said the lawyer. "I'm Kirkham—Lucas Kirkham—attorney for Mr.—er—Webster."

"Well?" returned the colonel coldly.

"I thought, perhaps, a little explanation—"

"Quite unnecessary," interrupted the colonel. "It's all perfectly clear to me."

"Then I need not tell you that my client really did leave your house that night by the back way?"

The girl gave a little gasp, but the colonel merely answered with emphasis, "No, sir, you need not."

"Of course, if he had given his real name and told the truth," the lawyer went on, "there would have been no trouble at all, but—"

"Yes," put in the colonel hastily, "I see the point. It was quite decent of him."

"But altogether against my advice," lied Kirkham.

"Oh, it was!" exclaimed the colonel.

"Too quixotic," asserted Kirkham. "A court is no place for that sort of stuff. But he said he would go to the penitentiary, if necessary, as Noah Webster rather than—"

"Yes, yes," interrupted the colonel. "Most commendable of him! I admit that he is more of a real man than I had supposed."

"Indeed he is!" asserted the girl. "I could have told you that."

"But it troubles my conscience," said Kirkham.

"I didn't know lawyers had such things!" snorted the colonel.

"It is a violation of the ethics of my profession," pursued Kirkham. "Of

course, the fact that it results in no miscarriage of justice modifies the offense, but still it's a violation of ethics. You ought to see that, Colonel. Now, as one of those most interested, don't you think I am justified in insisting that he go back and 'fess up?"

"Wh—what!" cried the colonel.

"It will all come out in time, you know," explained Kirkham, "and what kind of a predicament will I be in then?"

"Why will it all come out in time?" demanded the colonel.

"Oh, Mr.—er—Webster is bound to be caught some time—if he has to use the back way."

The colonel glared at the lawyer, but the latter seemed absorbed in his own thoughts.

"Yes," continued Kirkham, "that seems to be the best plan. It was a mistake to handle the affair this way. I can't afford to jeopardize my future. I must insist—"

The colonel sighed and interrupted. "If your client," he said, "will honor my daughter and myself with his company at dinner this evening I shall take pleasure in showing him how to get in the front way hereafter. He's a good deal of a man, after all, and his course in this affair has been most creditable to him but—but—how the devil did he get so many people to turn in and lie for him?"

"They didn't lie," replied Kirkham.

"D—didn't lie!" sputtered the colonel.

"Certainly not," asserted Kirkham. "They may have been mistaken in some things, but they didn't lie. A lie, you know, Colonel, is an intentional untruth. Take away the intent and you eliminate the lie."

"Oh well, let it go at that," said the colonel, "but it beats me."



McGillicuddy

McGillicuddy

BY LIEUT. HUGH JOHNSON, U. S. A

Author of "Fate's Fandango," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY O. IRWIN MYERS

MELL, Meggs and McGillicuddy were convalescents returning to their company along the Poulatong Road. The Poulatong Road was prohibited to unescorted detachments and to stragglers, but McGillicuddy had lied to the outpost commander and they had escaped.

To something beside the M's must be ascribed the fate that held the trio together, for it was fate and not selection. Their order of march indicated this. Private Mell was deeply shocked—aghast in fact—at Private McGillicuddy. Private McGillicuddy openly scorned Private Mell, and Private Meggs was kept in a state of droop-jawed amazement by them both. Ahead, marched Mell, his thin, pedagogue's face set to-

ward the goal of the distant mountains, mouth tight-drawn in uncompromising silence, rifle held stiffly in prim virtue. A trifle to the right and rear, slouched the heavy figure of McGillicuddy, twinkling little eyes appraising the pose of the emaciated Mell, gash of a mouth scoffing at it. Trotting like a faithful puppy at their heels, head cocked aside birdwise, astonished eyes questioning the vagaries of his comrades, was Meggs. Mell and McGillicuddy came from odd molds, but three thousand un-noteworthy little creatures like Meggs are born every day.

The Poulatong road climbs a little hill from whose crest may be seen a flat world, gridironed by rice-dykes, quilted by paddies. Here and there it is dotted

by the deep green of betel and bamboo at a *hacienda* whose buildings gleam white in the strong sunlight. In the near foreground there are always hopeless little groups like sluggish lizards toiling in a sea of slime—brown, umbrella-hatted men working thigh deep in sludge at the tails of primitive plows, drawn painfully by slow-moving buffalo. Beyond it all—so far and so mistily beyond that one can never be quite sure of it save for the glint and dance of the sun across it—is Manila Bay.

Mell reached the crest and stopped to heave a sigh of conventional appreciation. He was dizzy with fatigue, sick from exertion, but he would have heaved that sigh had it been his last.

"What a bee-you-teeful panorama!"

McGillicuddy grounded his rifle with a bang—spat and swore.

"Pan o' mud-puddles—Parson, you give me a pain."

Mell ostentatiously ignored him.

"Is it not then beautiful, Meggs? The wondrous land, the toiling native below us, earning his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, the fields, the hamlets, the villages—and the smiling bay beyond?"

Meggs was awed by the diction; he sidled toward Mell, casting an apologetic look at McGillicuddy. "It's vury purty—" he ventured weakly.

"It's a wondrous work of God," said Mell piously.

"It was the las' job He done an' He was in a hurry when He done it," blasphemed the big man. "Parson, y'ought to pan *dat* bull wid the udders. Wot call *you* got to be chewin' de fat 'bout pans o' ramas an' such, to a bunch like me an' Meggs here?"

"I ignore you," said Mell precisely.

"I will rejoice when the transport reaches home and I shall see you no more. You have reverence or respect for nothing. Why did such a man as you enlist—what motive could impel—"

"Wot's *dat* got to do wid it? I enlisted for the same reason *you* did. I *had* to eat."

"I enlisted to fight for my country," corrected Mell primly.

"You enlisted to git yer pipe-stems under a table. Because nobody'd fall

for dat phony bunk uv yours—teachin' kids in a *scho-o-l*. Do I bite at coarse stuff 'bout Star-Spankled-Banners? Do I look like a live one? Oh Lizzie!"

"There is one thing I will *not* endure," said Mell angrily, "and that is your disrespect to the flag."

Private McGillicuddy grinned broadly.

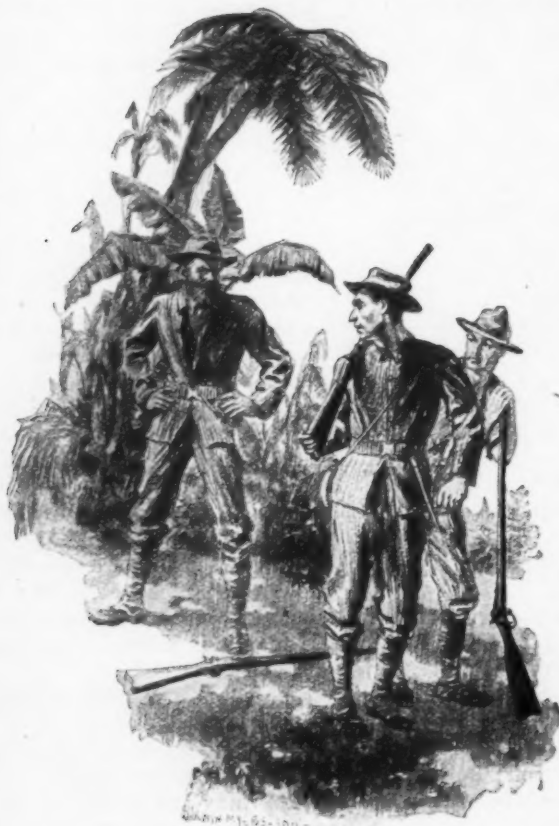
"*Sigue Dagoop Awanon Dios*—you wont? I don't fall for dat. De flag? Well wot do we know about dat?—Wot do I care for all the rags in de flag-box? De goo-goos can have 'em for door-mats for all me—an' dey could *take* 'em for all *you*."

Private Mell, sometime pedagogue, could find no words of reply. Perhaps there was a faint filtering through the rigid tissue of his brain that he was being baited. It made no difference. If it was scoffing, it was scoffing of a sort that he disapproved and what Mell disapproved he also detested. He was a narrow minded fanatic in a small way. Recovering a little, he turned.

"Come, Meggs," he said, "let us leave this man."

McGillicuddy seemed in no hurry to move. He bit an enormous corner from his Commissary plug and shifted it into an accustomed cheek. He leaned his well kept Krag against the road-embankment and reclined beside it, the breast of his blue shirt shaking with his chuckles, as he watched the departing pair descend the hill, Mell walking with the uncompromising erectness of Bunyan's armored Christian, Meggs close at his side and leaning toward him as though for comfort and support.

Whatever conscience McGillicuddy possessed was suffering no qualms. A fatherless survival of the San Francisco water-front, he had been kicked and cuffed until it was no longer safe to cuff and kick him by reason of his bulk. His mental map of the world had been a vague, pictorial chart, fringed by the Bay and the indefinite boundary between San Francisco up-town and the water-front. It had been a squalid world, but a perfectly adequate one. He thought of Germany as a mill that produced "Dutchmen;" Japan and China had



"Pan o' mud-puddles! You give me a pain!"

something to do with silk, he knew. But the United States might have been a condition of mind or a pleasure park for all his knowledge. He had enlisted for the exact reason quoted and he was already tired of his travels. As he reclined against the embankment of the Poulatong road, he was thinking of a "rag" on the Barbary Coast and wondering—

A little wind puffed up from the sea. It was profaned by the reek of wet rice lands and bamboo and carabao-stands and souring copra, but it carried something of the breeze that blows through the Golden Gate. McGillicuddy sniffed it and sat up. Far below him, he could see his comrades grown small in the distance and marching steadily. As he looked, they stopped, Mell leaning forward as though listening, Meggs edging fearfully in behind him. McGillicuddy

watched what happened for a moment before its bearing on his own impulses moved him.

He could never be quite sure where the little cotton-clad men came from. They dropped from the trees; they swarmed like ants from the ditches at the roadside and they burst through the hedge, yelling. Instantly the road was full of them—little brown men with bare feet, loose shirts, brandished bolos. McGillicuddy caught an instant's glimpse of Mell's thin shoulders towering above them and struggling. Then he woke.

He pulled down his hat as he ran. Instinctively, he reversed his rifle and swung it club-wise. He was seen and some excitedly aimed shots were fired. A brass-rimmed Remington bullet plopped at his feet and filled his face with a stinging sand. He struck the ruck in the road as a charging Percheron might blunder through a herd of Shetlands. He swung his rifle like a flail and he cleared a swath. The stock splintered on a head, leaving him with the bare barrel in his hands. A bolo slashed him across the chest and raised a red welt. Then he stumbled over a man in the road and went down—a Gulliver among the Little People. They pounced upon him in numbers and trussed him like a market pig.

Mell, Meggs and McGillicuddy were prisoners of the Insurrection. The Insurrection had few enough prisoners, and the people of all the squalid little towns needed heartening in the Cause. Possession of prisoners is one sign of success—so Mell, Meggs and McGillicuddy were used for purposes of exhibition. They were passed from town to town, from *Commandante* to *Commandante*. Sometimes they were treated al-

most well and sometimes they suffered unbelievable tortures. Mell has since written a book about it all in which he speaks of McGillicuddy as "this unfortunate man," "the brutal McGillicuddy," and once, "the coarse-grained creature." This is no addendum to that book, but here is exclusive information picked up by various officers at odd times and places.

Throughout the captivity—fat days and lean days alike—Mell maintained a perfectly consistent exterior. Cap him with a sugar-loaf, wide-brimmed hat, invest him with short cape, tight coat buttoned to the neck, knee breeks, low quarter-shoes and a psalm-book, and he cuts the perfect picture of a grim, lantern-jawed Puritan in the days of prosecution. Poor little Meggs lived through a season of nightmarish terror—cringing, truckling, abasing himself. This terror gave his captors delight and brought him a ten-fold measure of torture. But McGillicuddy—

The only mental anguish McGillicuddy suffered was the knowledge that he was a prisoner to a people he held in such contempt—a contempt monumental, oceanic, cosmical. He early learned Tagalog and he twisted it into terrific uses. People journeyed miles to see him squatting in the corner of his cell. They peered fearfully at him as country people at fairs peer into the wild man's pit. He reviled them horribly. It became the custom to cross oneself at the mention of his name. Once a be-dizened little officer, sashed, aiguilletted and resplendent in all the absurd military regalia of the skin-civilized, braved McGillicuddy (bound hand and foot) in his cell. The man's words hurt little, but the trappings enraged. McGillicuddy struggled to his feet, hopped across the room, caught the man against

the wall with his shoulder and would have gored him to death had the guards not come.

After criss-crossing the length of the valley of Luzon, Mell, Meggs and McGillicuddy were sent to Tuckwun, far in the heart of the mountains. For the days of the Insurrection were drawing to a close. Tuckwun was a hidden stronghold and, in more dignified operations, would have been called a Base of Supplies. Here powder, cartridges and bullets were made. Here salt was obtained.



McGillicuddy was sitting in front of the shack.

The *Commandante* of Tuckwun was a cheery, rotund little Filipino, possessed of something that approached a gen-you-wine Amurrican sense of humor. He was sorry for Meggs; he rather admired Mell and he was frankly amused at McGillicuddy.

But the King of the Tuckwun mountains was Miguel Hypolito San Crispulo y Buena Ventura. Nothing of the hybridizing influences that have evolved the Filipino nation had touched the forbears of Miguel. He was a Malay, pure and simple—a squat, swart, narrow-eyed, slab-cheeked little tangle of muscle. Before the Insurrection—for the whole of his active life, in fact—Miguel had been a fighting *ladrone*, the terror of all the Northern country. When the Insurrection took form, he had been a power, for he controlled the hill people by fear and by benefit. He had hated the Spaniards because they were white and he detested the Americans because they were whiter. He had left Tuckwun under the *Commandante* in order to take the field in the valley.

One day the *Commandante* called Mell to his *officina*.

"I called you here to warn you," he explained in Spanish. "Miguel Hypolito is coming back. He is a terrible man—a Filipino—all. He hates aliens. *You* perhaps may escape without trouble. You keep silence. You do your work. For the Señor May-eegs, there is danger. He should appear less afraid. But for Señor Miguel-y-Koodee—ah! *Que Lastima!* It is a great pity, for Miguel will not understand. He is a terrible man. He—" And the *Commandante*, with many exclamations of horror at his own recital, recounted some of the milder of Miguel's exploits. He had buried a man to the mouth in the slime of the Great Candaba Swamp. He had—gone further than civilized imagination should follow, into the horrible tortures of savagery.

Mell's cheeks went cold with terror, but he said nothing. He went back to the prison shack. To McGillicuddy, he had not willingly spoken ten words since their capture. By the big man's avowal on that day, he had placed him-

self forever beyond the iron-bound pale of Mell's approval and he had made no effort to return, for he had never ceased to abuse Mell when and where the idea struck him. Now it was Mell's duty to repeat the *Commandante's* warning. This duty he did, precisely, painfully. McGillicuddy rocked to and fro on his haunches, roaring in scorn and derision. Even the guard, who understood a little English, was aghast at his profanities. He railed at Mell for a coward. He recalled the words of their final quarrel and elaborated upon them, until Mell begged him to desist in the presence of the guard, who would report to his superiors all that passed between the prisoners.

One day at dusk, McGillicuddy was sitting in front of the prison shack, knotting the tatters of his shirt into a fantastic design that would better cover his naked chest. His face was covered with a stringy, black beard. His arms and neck were seamed with abrasions acquired in enforced floundering through the brush. The salt had worked into these sores and he had scratched them. His face was gaunt and, like his arms and shoulders, burned brown. He was an unpleasant sight, but, beneath the ribbons of his flannel, the torso muscles showed hard and powerful; his shoulders were unusually broad, his chest great, and his limbs were lithe and graceful, even in repose. He was relieving the tedium by reviling the guard. At a particular moment, he was describing the sixth generation back of the man's ancestors—in Tagalog. His conception was unique. It loses regrettably in translation.

"And the grandmother of *that* moth-eaten monkey was the degenerate cross between an immoral hyena and a hare-lipped hound—"

There was a rustle in the cogon grass by the sentry's post—a mere rustle that did not attract the attention of McGillicuddy. When he did look up, it was to find himself being surveyed by the sinister eyes of Miguel. His face made instantly an ear-to-ear grin of contemptuous mockery.

"Well, will you *look* wot's here, fel-

lers—ef it *aint* de reg-oo-lar-little miss-in' lynx hisself." McGillicuddy dropped his face into his cradled hands and snorted through his fingers. Miguel simply passed thoughtfully on into the shack without a word or gesture. Mell did not turn his head, but little Meggs got uneasily to his feet and stood "attention" as he would have done for one of his own officers.

At this, Miguel sneered. He had no little curiosity regarding two of the prisoners, for he had heard reports of them for months. Their actions, their quarrels, their very words were known to him, and if he did not understand them, he was deeply interested. He had no patience with the keeping of prisoners. It was a phase quite absent from his conception of war. The Insurrection was broken, and he knew it. He no longer reported to Insurrectionary headquarters. He was a power in himself.

At dawn next day, one of Miguel's irregulars came to the prison shack and departed with Meggs, who was sniveling in terrified apprehension. He was returned in less than half an hour. There was a welt above his eye as though he had been struck heavily with a horse rasp. He staggered through the door and, without a look at his comrades, ran to his mats in the corner of the room, and threw himself face down, crying uncontrolledly. Mell made a move toward him, but it was Mell's turn next, and he quietly answered his summons. McGillicuddy stooped over the boy.

"Wot's de matter, sonny?" he asked. "Tell me wot dey done to you?" His voice was quiet with anger, but Meggs did not tell him.

"Oh, I can't—don't ask me—they'd kill me—it's turrible—turrible!"

Before Mell returned, McGillicuddy was summoned. He was first bound, hands behind back, the rope that hobbled his feet strung out for a leading thong. The convoy made a tedious way to the *officina*, a low, windowless building whose floor was the red earth and whose walls were panels of *sowali* matting in bamboo frames. McGillicuddy was halted outside and ordered to squat on the ground and wait.

A sentry kept stragglers from the street. From the gloom of the building, McGillicuddy could hear the low murmur of some one monotonously talking; then there fell a silence, punctuated at last by a single word in the rising inflection of a question, repeated at long, regular intervals in exactly the same tone each time. Once there was the aspirated "O-o-h--h-h!" that is forced from one that is attempting silently to endure pain. After a time, McGillicuddy heard the deadened scuffling of feet in gravel and a single, jeering word. Then, unbound and free, there walked through the door the figure of Mell.

McGillicuddy caught one glimpse of the face—white and vacant. Mell always passed McGillicuddy with his nose in the air, not even deigning to notice the big man by averting his head. There was nothing stiff, uncompromising or grim in Mell to-day. His shoulders were slumped forward; his gait was shuffling and aimless. He did not let McGillicuddy see his bowed face again.

McGillicuddy could not well make out objects in the gloom of the *officina* at first. There was a broad copper bowl on the floor, filled with coals that were kept alive by the wheezing of a bamboo bellows. Faces were intent upon something in the coals, and the red glow heightened the irregularities of these faces and made them uglier. Presently McGillicuddy saw that Miguel was seated on a mat, cross-legged, a little apart from the brazier. He scarcely glanced at Miguel because there was another object there that fascinated him and held his numb attention. It was a piece of crumpled cloth—colored—and it lay in the gravel a yard from Miguel. Pebbles and sand had been scuffed across it and—*this* was what held McGillicuddy's attention—its folds faithfully followed, in the sand beneath it, the deep imprint of a bare human foot.

It was an American flag—a cheap cotton print, but McGillicuddy did not raise his eyes from it. Miguel was speaking.

"I called you here—not as I did the others, whom I despise and condemn. I am growing old and the Insurrection is



He swung his rifle like a flail and cleared a swath

over. I must keep my teeth to live. I have need of a *man*. These jack-in-the-boxes are faithful, but they are of no use—" He seemed to be reminded of something, for he made a gesture with his hand. Out of the shadows shuffled two little men. Their trunks inclined forward from their hips at an unusual angle; their knotty hands dangled very low along their deeply bowed legs. McGillicuddy's down-cast eyes saw their feet—short and broad, with very mobile, very widely diverging great-toes. They freed him from his ropes and shuffled back.

"I require a lieutenant—some one to help rule the hill country. I require *you*, *Señor*. I know you. You have no foolish ideas about loyalty to the Americans—you do not care. You are not an American—"

McGillicuddy's cheeks tingled.

"That is well, for sometimes it may be necessary to fight them. As for the rest—there will be wealth, and women, and slaves and power. You will like that. There will be fighting—"

McGillicuddy had said not a word. His moments of reflection were never deep, for he was moved mostly by impulses—of these he had experienced several since Miguel had begun to describe the very sort of life that he had always *thought* that he yearned for. Miguel was still speaking, but a questioning note sounded now.

"I forced the tall, thin man to trample on *that*," he said, indicating the flag, "because I have heard what he has boasted and because I enjoyed breaking him. I thought how *you* would have liked that and I wanted you to see it. But it was necessary first that we agree—there will be other times."

Miguel paused and leaned a little forward to see the face of the man before him. He was waiting for McGillicuddy to speak.

"*Cosa?*" he asked finally, but he received no reply.

McGillicuddy had thrashed a steve-

dore once for no other reason than that the man was cuffing a youngster in much the same fashion that McGillicuddy had been cuffed before *that* pastime became dangerous. The cheap flag looked very helpless and pathetic there on the sand. When Miguel spoke again, it was doubtfully, and there was a little threat in his words.

"Of course, there would be no sport in *this*"—he waved his hand toward the candent irons in the brazier—"with *you*. In case of refusal or doubt, I would not delay one second with *you*. I would take your head, *Señor*," he continued gently.

There was a full five minutes of absolute silence.

Then Miguel made a motion. The two irregulars shuffled into the glow from the brazier. McGillicuddy looked almost with curiosity at the weapons ready in their hands, for they were wavy Malay krisses and not the universal tabaks or Talivang bolos of Luzon.

"I will require—as a mere pledge of faith—*this* from you." Miguel pointed at the flag and McGillicuddy dropped his eyes to it again. Something within him began to seethe. It tingled in the muscles of his chest and arms. It constricted his throat. His eyes searched the ground for something heavy to hold in his hand and they discovered only a broken bamboe stake. There was a movement in the back of the room and he was aware of ranks of bolo-men. There was no hope. The Tagalog of Miguel was still droning.

"I offer you much—" (he was still uncertain of the meaning of the silence) "—wealth and women and power. I ask nothing but what you have done a thousand times—"

That was the whip-crack that released the avalanche. McGillicuddy was across the room toward Miguel, his voice screaming rage, and shrilling away in inadequacy.

"You—you—you! Oh, *you*—go—to Hell!"



"Why, what has happened? Why the deluge?" he asked in surprise

On The Market Street

BY FRANCES A. LUDWIG

Author of "The Acknowledging of Earl," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN

HILDA BOUCHARDE balanced herself upon the threshold of the office doorway and peered uncertainly into the gloom of the interior. The entrance to the average business house on South Dexter street is not inviting; Hilda passed the place three times before she could make up her mind to investigate its unattractiveness; even then she had been driven in, for she became aware that she was attracting the attention of a group of loungers outside. And when she had made timid inquiry of a shirt-sleeved gentleman who was in the act of weighing a slain brindle calf, and he had replied by jerking one hand toward a dark, forbidding stairway, she frantically wished herself far away. However, she summoned her courage and fearfully climbed the creaking stairs.

Soon her eyes, sun-dazzled by the street, became accustomed to the dim light. The man who swung round to greet her had merry eyes and a benevolent forehead, but graying hair, a firm jaw and a wide, unscrupulous mouth contradicted any suspicion of inefficiency that a certain boyish slenderness of build might have incurred.

"Are you the gentleman who advertised for a stenographer and book-keeper?" Hilda asked.

"I'm the party."

As he smiled, his face looked young, young enough to be in perfect keeping with his youthful figure. Fine lines, unintelligible to the girl, but plain to a reader of physiognomy, broke and softened, giving to his countenance a curiously winsome appeal.

"I think you will be able to do my work in fine shape," he assured her, after a short cross-examination. "This isn't the nicest place in the world for a lady, but we'll do all we can to make it pleasant for you. In the front office,"—he indicated it by a jerk,—“there are several young ladies, so it won't be as though you were the only one on the floor. I shall expect you, then, to-morrow morning.”

As Hilda went out, she heard a quick scurry of feet and the door banged after her. She did not know that the office-boy, who, with his eye to a crack in the partition had been appraising her, was expressing his complete satisfaction with his employer's selection.

Early the next morning the same boy gave her a quantity of unsolicited information. She learned: (1) that her employer was Roger Bowen, indexed in the Mercantile agencies, half-way to the bottom, as "R. Bowen & Co., company nominal;" (2) that he was thirty-two years old, unmarried, and "a dead game sport;" (3) that he owned a six-cylinder automobile; (4) that he was familiarly known as "Algy," because he was "such a hot dresser;" (5) that the lady pictured in the oval frame upon his desk was his "steady," and (6) that as a boss he left nothing to be desired.

So, when the gentleman appeared in person an hour later, Hilda was ready to accord him that interest and curiosity that a man of his repute always inspires in the bosom of any normal young woman. In addition, Hilda, being as sophisticated as the average girl of her years, born and reared in a large city, knew what line of conduct was open to her as a self-respecting young person, and was quite prepared to follow it with rigid exactness.

It is the proud boast of the merchants of South Dexter Street that there is no other street like it in the world. So distinctive in character is it that it is commonly referred to, even by those who come not within its immediate environs, as "The Street."

It is certain that there is no street more democratic in the world. Grapes

from Spain, lemons from Sicily, quaint fruits from the South Sea Islands, sit in juxtaposition to the humble, home-grown cabbage and onion. The air is rent by the squawk of crated feathered things, and filled with the polyglot babel of many nations. The rumble of the heavy truck-wagons, close-packed on the cobble-stones, drowns the roar common to all the city, save when the raucous whistle of some fruit steamer towing up the river which the Street parallels, rises high above it. And over the entire vicinity hangs a thickly odoriferous pall—a fragrance of many fruits curiously commingled with the pungent perfume of stored tobacco, the rare aromas of roasting coffee and new-ground spices, the repellent odors of baled wool and green hides, together with the thousand and one lesser constituent scents which go to make up that strange and heavily freighted atmosphere so peculiar to the Street.

The office of one of its merchants has nothing to do with traditional glass and mahogany, even though the wealth and influence of its occupant be great enough to sway a legislature or control the citrus output of a state. Nor are there any red-tape difficulties in obtaining audience with him. From teamster to bank president, all that is required is to drape oneself over the counter that bars off the stenographer, and inquire, casually: "S Billy in?"

Therefore it is not strange that an unusual lack of formality should exist between employer and employed, or that Roger Bowen should have suggested, offhand, that Miss Boucharde take dinner with him on a certain night when she had been detained beyond the usual hour for closing.

Her prompt refusal seemed to surprise him. "Why not?" he urged. "It'll be late when you get through."

Hilda flushed resentfully. He knew—or should know—as well as she why she could not accept his hospitality. The position of Caesar's wife was not a circumstance to that of a young and pretty working-girl—especially in the somewhat murky atmosphere of South Dexter

Street. Hilda's pride was very rigid and her ideals were very high. And of course she could not humiliate herself by giving him her reasons; furthermore, he was her employer and—

She glanced down at her cheap, black skirt with its rusty hem. "I'm not dressed—I—I don't look well enough."

He surveyed her critically. "Nonsense! But we'll get around that all right if it bothers you. We'll go where there won't anyone see us."

This was alarming. Hilda stiffened. "No-no, really, I can't," she stammered. "I can't spare the time; I must go right home. I—I—have an engagement."

"Oh," said he. There was unmistakable disappointment in the tone of the exclamation. Hilda's heart gave a sudden, unexpected throb and she bent over her ledger lest he should remark her quickened breathing.

He lingered the next morning, slowly drawing on his gloves before leaving to do his daily buying. He was surveying her with a new interest.

"What's your first name, Miss Boucharde?"

"Hilda."

"*Svenska*, eh? How came you by it?"

"My mother is Swedish." Hilda spoke a little stiffly.

"And the other—polly-voo-frawn-say?"

His tone was void of offense, but Hilda answered still more stiffly.

"My father was French," she said.

"*Was*, eh?"

"He is dead," explained the girl.

His face became serious immediately. "That's too bad. I'm sorry I spoke. But you have the advantage of me at that. I'm a whole orphan and my uncle brought me up. Chap with gray side-whiskers that comes in here. Great old boy!" He chuckled appreciatively. "My aunt's a very fine woman—they've both been good to me." He added, as in after-thought, "I had ten thousand dollars."

As it was not clear to her what was required in reply to this speech, Hilda remained silent. He opened the door and stopped again. "*Svenska* and French, eh? Well, it's a good combination." He was

regarding her with evident approbation. "I won't be back till four. Look up that kick on that Springfield car of onions if you have time."

None but a prude could have taken umbrage at his frank, inoffensive familiarity.

Yet Hilda was vaguely uneasy. Glitter and lights had no temptations for her; jewels, ease and luxury, all things that are supposed to weigh the soul of a woman in the balance, would not have caused the scales to descend by the thickness of a hair—had the soul been Hilda's. But constant daily contact with a man like Roger Bowen, the appeal of his masculine charm, none the less virile because of his refinement of body, the intimacy that comes through a common interest, the freedom that propinquity brings—she knew instinctively that against the influence of these things she must stand as adamant. Being young and untried, she had no fear. And then—Hilda jabbed her pen viciously into the ink and set her lips together. She was a fool to imagine that he had looked approvingly upon her—and how dared he—if he had? Was there not the dahlia lady?

Hilda had given that name to the girl of the oval frame, who called at the office occasionally. Durable as to complexion, opulent as to figure, her hair like smooth, spun-sugar taffy, she made one think of the satiny, full-quilled queen of the gardens. And upon their first meeting it had taken each of the women just five seconds to estimate and place the other, without prejudice—and without mercy.

Now, when a man is paying court to a lady—even though she be a dahlia lady—there is no shadow of an excuse for his looking with favor upon another woman, whatever her station. Such was Hilda's creed. So she viciously slammed down the cover of her ledger and turned, just in time to face Bowen as he came through the door. In his clasped hands he carried a huge bunch of violets and his eyes were crinkled in a smile of anticipation.

"Aren't these pretty, Miss Boucharde?"



It is the boast of the merchants of South Dexter Street that there is no other street like it in the world

Smell 'em." He swung his burden forward until it pressed against Hilda's straight, slim nose. She gave a little gasp and backed away.

"Aren't they great, though? Here, let's put 'em in something."

A jar, half-full of samples of preserved ginger stood on the safe. He emp-

tied it, filled it with water from the cooler, jammed in the violets and was about to set it before the girl when he noted her unsmiling eyes and straight little mouth.

"I believe I'll have 'em on my own desk," he said.

Barometrically, he had sensed a cool-

ness in the office atmosphere. He buried his nose in the blossoms, sniffing luxuriously. "They're samples," he vouchsafed over his shoulder. "Peabody got in a lot from the South. Thought perhaps we could sell 'em to some local florists."

The tips of Hilda's ears began to tingle. He had left her defenseless—and ashamed of her attitude of defense. The fragrance of the violets filled the little room, a grateful change from the odor of hides, chicken-coops and feathers that surged up from below at frequent intervals.

When the day was over and she was pinning on her hat, he stopped her.

"Don't you want to take 'em home with you, Miss Boucharde? They'll do you more good than they will here." He started to remove the flowers from the jar.

For a full minute Hilda struggled with herself. Little Marie and Pierre and her mother loved flowers—and so few were the blossoms that came their way! She dreaded, too, that boyish look of disappointment that she knew would come into Roger Bowen's face if she refused. Hilda suddenly flared. What *right* had he to make her feel that she was hurting him!

"No-no, thanks. I don't care for violets," she said. "The—the scent of them makes me ill."

II

The busy summer passed. Hilda had mastered all the details of Roger Bowen's business. She was not particularly apt, but what she lacked in rapidity she made up in reliability. Her growing knowledge of trade conditions and commodities enabled her to handle the office correspondence almost unaided. Any hint on his part of other than the strictest business relations had met with determined rebuffs. She ignored presents disguised as samples; she was sometimes short with him to the verge of rudeness; she, herself, wondered at the man's imperturbable good nature. Women seldom had been indifferent to Roger Bowen and the girl's attitude privately

piqued him, although it did not, by any means, make him undervalue her services.

More and more he left the office management to her. She could soothe an irate customer as well as he; she could couch a dun in terms that would not offend the most sensitive of delinquent debtors; she could give a most convincing explanation concerning a case of decayed oranges or pineapples—she was even better at it than he, for she was firmly convinced of the truth of her statements. Whatever her opinion of him personally, she considered Bowen the soul of honor in his business methods and upheld, fiercely, the integrity of the firm. So when an angry, black-browed man banged open the office door one morning, she merely prepared to rectify some error and turned, blandly, to greet him.

"Algy in?" His tone was offensively aggressive. "I see he isn't. Knows I'm in town, I suppose. When'll he be back?"

"I don't know," she replied. "Isn't there anything I can do for you? Do you wish to leave a message for Mr. Bowen?"

"Yes," he growled. "I've got to leave on the 11:40 and I thought I'd see him on the Street, but he's kept out of sight. You can tell him that car of apples he shipped last week is still on the track at his disposal—Freeman & Co. I paid the freight on it, and I'm going to deduct it from my next remittance, too. And you can tell him I'm through. He's used me for a dumping ground long enough. Every one of those barrels will average three worms to the apple—billed as 'fancy'—four dollars a barrel!"

"Oh, there's some mistake." Hilda was very confident. "You must have got the wrong car. He wouldn't have billed them as fancy unless they were. He'll make you an allowance."

"You bet he will! And he'll hunt another sucker after this. You mail me a statement to-night and when I've cleaned up my account I'm done."

Hilda had drawn herself up stiffly, her cheeks flaming.

"You must be mistaken," she insisted.



"Every one of those barrels will average three worms to the apple"

"Errors in shipping will happen." Her lips quivered for she took such matters very seriously. "Mr. Bowen always tries to ship the best he can and—"

"He does, eh?" Mr. Freeman planted himself in front of her, jammed his

hands in his pockets and took a firm grip on his cigar. "See here, young woman"—Hilda drew back. "I've known Algy Bowen longer'n you have, and take it from me, he's the biggest grafter on the Street—and the smoothest. Why, he

even fooled me! But I've learned a few things lately. Algy's a fine fellow, all right; but don't you ever think he's in business for his health. None of us are, for that matter, but his work is just a little bit *too* raw." He turned to go. "And don't forget that statement."

Hilda had turned pale. "You have no right to come in here and make such statements, Mr. Freeman," she said in a voice that trembled between anger and tears. "Mr. Bowen is *always* ready to do what is right in matters of this sort and you—you—" She could go no further.

Her visitor removed his cigar and studied her in surprise. "Well, say," he began, "I didn't mean to upset you like this. You mustn't take it so hard. I didn't know that you—"

Hilda turned upon him desperately. "Will you please excuse me for a moment? I—I have an errand in the other office."

"Um-m," observed Mr. Freeman at her retreating back. "Um-m-m," he continued with a thoughtful smile as he went down the stairs.

Hilda returned to her ledger. She worked valiantly for some time, then stopped and considered the page before her with a thoughtful frown. Apparently some cabalistic mystery was concealed in the columns of neat, black figures. Presently a tear dropped upon them. She blotted it carefully, but when she had done so, several more marred the smooth paper. Then she climbed down from her stool, went to Roger Bowen's desk, leaned her cheek against his immaculate and coldly inanimate cuffs—and cried. Coming in he found her thus.

"Why, what's happened? Why the de-luge?" he asked in surprise.

"I—I don't feel well," sobbed Hilda.

"You'd better go right home." His voice expressed real concern. "Don't worry about the letters—I'll get along."

Hilda shook her head. "I—I'm just silly. I'll be all right in a little while. I—I think I'll go to lunch now—if you don't mind."

"Yes, do," he urged. "I wish—" He stopped.

Hilda dabbed her eyes, powdered her

nose and went out. She was quite her usual self when she returned. Bowen, coming in late to check his shipments, seemed greatly elated and whistled cheerfully the whole time. He stood watching her as she made ready to depart, barring her passage as if unconsciously.

"So Freeman called me a crook, did he?" His eyes were dancing wells of light. "And you bawled him out. Good girl; good girl!"

"He was very ungentlemanly," she answered, "and he said things that—aren't so."

A smile of satisfaction bent his lips. "I'm no crook. But I don't pretend to be a philanthropist, either. If you want to make good in this business you've got to do the other fellow before he does you. And both of you know it. Freeman was a bit peeved, that's all. He'll realize when he cools off that I'm as square as any of them, squarer than most."

"I know you are," cried Hilda vehemently.

An eager flush passed over the face of the man, as impulsively he threw his arm around the girl and drew her to him. "Was that why you cried, Hilda?" he whispered exultantly. "Tell me, was that why you cried?"

She drew a quick, sobbing breath and stood silent. Then she jerked away from his encircling arm and turned upon him, white with fury. A torrent of hysterical denunciation rushed to her lips. The consciousness of the thrill that had leaped through her at his touch, the agitation of the day, the sickening realization that thereafter their relations could not be the same, that she must leave his employ, all combined to lend venom to her words. And that very day the dahlia lady had telephoned to him; Hilda had heard him discuss a projected moon-light trip to a place famed for its catering and its lack of conventional formalities! She brushed at her waist with her handkerchief as if to wipe away the desecration of his touch—and paused for breath.

"Just a minute, Miss Boucharde." His voice was quiet and businesslike, his face cold. "You said something about



Her voice dropped to a whisper. "It's my fault—my fault. I've ruined you!"

leaving me. I wish you'd please reconsider. You know how much I need you—just at this time. I most humbly beg your pardon. If you'll do me the favor of staying I give you my word of honor that you'll never be annoyed in such a manner again. And I don't want you to think that I meant to insult you—for I didn't. I—I don't suppose that I could make you understand—but it doesn't matter. What you have just said is all true. All I can say is that I'm sorry—and if you'll forget it and stay—I'll be very grateful indeed."

Hilda stood silent.

"Please," he urged. "I will never forget myself again."

Hilda thought of her cheerful, patient mother, trotting back and forth, all day long, between their living rooms and the little school store that helped them to exist. Once her hair had been bright and her cheeks as pink as her daughter's were now. She thought of baby Pierre, whose Gallic name afforded such an amusing contrast to his blue eyes and flaxen hair; she thought of black-eyed, chattering Marie, who was not yet big enough to be anything but a lovable nuisance; she thought of Rudie, patient Rudie, who rose at five each morning to deliver papers and whose every stray nickel and penny went into the family fund, bringing him no nearer to the violin that was his heart's desire. She thought of the rent, the gas bill, the shoes that Marie must have the coming week, even of the holiday treats she had promised her eager brothers and sisters, the first that she had been able to plan since the death of their father. Her head drooped and she knew that she was very weary.

"I'll stay," she answered.

III

There is one subject that never fails to kindle interest—and usually anathema—when introduced in conversation on South Dexter Street. It is the weather. When Nature smiles upon all growing things, farmer and merchant prosper alike in moderation; when she tempers

her winds to one section and empties the storms of her wrath upon another, fortunes are made—of which the middleman gets a generous slice, while the pocket-book of the unfortunate consumer is depleted. But when she shows no favoritism, when at mid-blossom time she turns the ice of her spite against all budding things, then is ruin, devastation and gloom.

Two days of freezing weather in the midst of early spring had killed even the leaves on the peach and plum trees, and caused the apples to carpet the earth with crinkled brown petals. The commission men and brokers pinned their hopes to what vegetables and small fruits had been spared. Farmers replanted, while banks called in their loans and frowned on over-drafts; big dealers turned a deaf ear to pleas for extensions of credit. Roger Bowen chewed fiercely on his dead cigar and scowled at the dwindling balance shown on his monthly bank statement. He came early to the office and remained late these days and his smile was less frequent and seldom boyish. The intervals, too, between the dahlia lady's visits grew long and longer, and Hilda noticed with pagan satisfaction that he was sometimes brusque with her over the telephone—and that his florist's bills diminished steadily.

Toward the girl his attitude was always the acme of business courtesy, nothing more. He kept his word to the letter. He left the office early and remained on the Street all day. During the winter the office-boy had been dispensed with; in the spring he was not recalled. Hilda added his duties to her own without complaint. She carried home huge bundles of trade circulars and addressed them at night. She felt a proprietary interest in the crates of cucumbers, tomatoes and cabbage that she billed out each day at such ruinously high prices. Her work had become part of her life; her employer's interests had come to be hers.

And his were not the only perplexities that were helping to bring new, tiny lines in Hilda's smooth forehead. Little

Pierre had been ill during the winter, requiring his mother's close attention; under the unskilled management of Marie and Rudie the store had run haphazard, with a resultant falling off of trade. Doctors' bills had taken the new suit that Hilda should have had, and even now Pierre was far from strong and needed, indeed, must have, luxuries that it seemed impossible to buy. It may have been of these things she was thinking as she closed the safe door for the night; for, in a moment of abstraction, she allowed its five hundred pounds' weight to swing slowly shut upon her thumb.

The shock and pain were not so great but that she had the presence of mind to jerk back the mass of steel in time to save her finger from complete mutilation; but as she stood without outcry, sick and dizzy, there sounded suddenly a roar, as of water, in her ears, and she fainted at Roger Bowen's feet.

When she opened her eyes his folded coat was beneath her head and he was kneeling beside her, frantically doing his best with a basin of water and a wet towel. Hilda smiled weakly and made as if to rise. She had never fainted in her life before.

He gently restrained her. "No, indeed. You stay right where you are for a few minutes. Don't move until I come."

He was back almost immediately with something sweet and fiery which he made her drink.

As he watched the color come back to her face he drew a breath of relief and satisfaction.

"That's better. If you hadn't kept still you wouldn't have fainted. Why didn't you make a noise about it?" He was tearing up his handkerchief as he spoke; he wet it and with the utmost care wound it around the bruised and throbbing little thumb.

"The best thing for you to do is to get home as quick as you can make it—and I'm going to take you in my machine. Now don't make any objections—" Hilda had started to protest, weakly. "You're not fit to walk, even to a

car. You see,"—he favored her with his charming smile—"it's a matter of policy on my part. I can't afford to have you permanently disabled. Just forget those high-brow notions of yours for once and come along peaceably—if you don't, I'm going to make you."

As they went out of the door the telephone gave a last, long peal and was silent. It came to Hilda that it had been ringing for the past five minutes, unheeded by either of them. She wondered if it were the dahlia lady calling.

Their course led through parks and boulevards, past fountains of light and strings of electric lamps like iridescent bubbles. She settled back in the cushions, and in spite of her aching thumb, gave herself up to the physical enjoyment of the swift motion through the soft night air. Not until they turned into the cross street that led to her home, did Bowen speak.

"I'm glad you had this ride. I'm sorry you had to smash your thumb to get it—but I'm glad you could have this last ride."

She looked up at him, interrogation in her eyes.

"I've sold the machine." He smiled down at her but there was a tinge of regret in his voice and he ran his hand around the edge of the steering wheel as if the feel of it were good to him.

"I haven't told you before—there's a strike ordered—a general teamsters' strike. The express drivers have all gone out. If it isn't settled inside of two weeks—"

The strawberry season had opened with wonderful promise. Bowen, like many others, had counted on its certain profits to put himself on a firm footing against a possibly disastrous autumn. In the height of the season, even a small shipper will send out four or five hundred cases of the berries a day for several weeks. It is a fragile fruit at best, and will not endure long carriage. And with all express drivers on a strike—

Hilda sat bolt upright. "Oh, what shall we do?" she pleaded. The plural was quite unconscious.

"Like all the rest—the best we can—"

which will be nothing." He laughed shortly. "But I'll give you the check for the machine in the morning and you take it over first thing. It'll keep us out of deep water for a while."

Hilda paused with her foot on the running board when they stopped before her dingy little home. "Thank you very much, Mr. Bowen." She halted in embarrassment. What was expected of her? She did not wish to seem rude or ungrateful, and yet—

"Will you—will you come in and see my mother?" she stammered.

He accepted with alacrity, and was forthwith introduced to the little mother, to Rudie, Marie and Pierre, to all of whom he made himself so agreeable that they were loath to see him go. Hilda was the only silent one among them all. Even bashful Rudie talked and was at his ease. But Hilda went to bed that night with softened, dreamy eyes, even though her brow was puckered perplexedly at the thought of all the things that augured so ill for Roger Bowen.

The strike dragged on for a month. Berries rotted on the wharves, and shipping-clerks stood idle. Firms with gilt-edged credit collapsed like soap-bubbles and in the wake of their failures came others—small dealers, caught in the big men's nets. Confidence was shaken; no man trusted his neighbor; each fought for his own salvation.

July opened with the heat of a blast furnace. Bowen speculated heavily in lemons; it seemed a surety that they would touch top-notch prices. It turned suddenly cold and citric acid was at a discount. It remained cool and to save himself from complete annihilation, he was obliged to sell at a tremendous loss. That week two more firms went under and Bowen came down to the office minus his watch, his scarf-pin and his diamond ring. As he handed Hilda their proceeds to deposit, he told her that he had moved from his North-side bachelor's quarters to a room within walking distance.

"We'll stick to the ship as long as she floats, Hilda," he said with a grim

smile. He called her Hilda now, quite unconsciously, and she suffered it with equal unconcern.

Hilda twirled her pencil in one spot until it had made a little hole in the paper. "Mr. Bowen," she began.

"Well?" He was hacking at the end of a cigar with her paper knife.

"I—I would be willing to work for you for less salary for a while—until you get on your feet again—if that would help any."

He crossed his arms and leaned on the desk beside her for a few minutes in silence.

"And there's the mother—and Rudie—and Marie—and Pierre." He spoke slowly. "No, child; no. When it comes to that we'll quit all of a sudden." He critically examined the cigar he was holding. "But I think it's up to friend Algy to smoke 'two-fer's' after this. He's about down to bed-rock, Hilda."

And that afternoon she caught the glitter of something in the waste-paper basket. It was the gilt oval that had encircled the dahlia lady's studied smile—and it was empty.

IV

Hilda had become adept in every legitimate means of staving off creditors and gaining time. She paid her bills on Saturday that checks might not be presented to the bank for payment until Monday—and she could calculate with great accuracy just how much of an overdraft would be covered by Monday's remittances. She became an expert at the game of "putting up a bluff." Bowen's face grew haggard and that sartorial nicety which had been characteristic of him suffered—but still the firm of R. Bowen & Co. stumbled precariously along. Then, at what seemed the eleventh hour, came a reprieve.

He waved the letter at Hilda, almost incoherent with excitement from its perusal.

"Look here, look here! I supposed his apples had been killed along with the rest. And he writes that he'll have a thousand barrels—he's got the finest

orchard in his state—and girl, girl, they'll be worth their weight in gold!"

Hilda stared at him blankly.

"Of course you don't understand—I'll begin at the beginning. He tells me that the frost didn't do any great damage in his section—the orchards are on side hills and they're protected, somehow. He ships me every year, but last year the yield was fair all over. He has nothing but the finest varieties—it's a sort of a hobby with him. He's a character, a rich old geezer, and a crank on religion. Couple of years back I sold a car of his stuff that had been refused by the cutthroats he billed it to. I got him out without loss and since then he's stuck to me like glue. The eastern fellows haven't been able to get a look-in. He's got an idea I'm the only honest broker in the U. S.—regular reincarnation of George Washington." He drew down his face with mischievous solemnity. "I'll admit I've fostered the notion—he even believes I'm a brother palm-singer."

Hilda tried hard not to smile but her lips twitched. "Has he ever seen you?" she asked slyly.

"No, but he's asked me to visit him and by George, if his apples pull me through I'll be so everlastingly grateful that I'd be willing to chance it!"

Hilda pondered. "But how—how are you going to manage—"

"I'll see my uncle to-night. I wouldn't ask him to risk his money when things looked as black as they did. I'll give the old boy, I mean the grower, a good big deposit and he'll take my note for the balance. With the prospect of a thousand barrels of fancy apples in the cooler—Gad! I can hardly believe it! It's too good to be true."

He went out whistling. Hilda caught his enthusiasm and felt the delicious relaxation of dependence upon a certain promise. She had not realized how great had been the strain.

The apples came, fragrant, heavy barrels of them, and fulfilled Bowen's greatest expectations. He was jubilant; he did not try to conceal his elation.

"The prettiest things you ever saw,"

he told her. "Straight through the barrel they go, all just like the face of 'em. You ought to see the fellows standing around with their mouths watering. At the price I'm giving I'll more than double on them in the spring. The last barrel goes in the cooler this noon. I'll give you the warehouse receipts when I come in from lunch and you call up Morrison of the Mutual and have 'em insured for their full selling value. Then I'll turn the papers over to the uncle for security—I was going to get a loan on 'em from the bank but he says he'd rather have the interest than the cash."

Three times Hilda telephoned to the insurance agents. Three times the wire was busy. Then came a call for her, an agonized appeal from her mother. Little Pierre had been taken violently ill and Hilda must drop everything and come home.

That night the Peerless cold-storage plant burned. It was a magnificent spectacle, but Roger Bowen, standing just outside the lines of reeking hose and firemen, cursed his luck; while Hilda, unknowing, bent over a little fever parched body until the gray dawn came and the baby opened his eyes and smiled up at her.

She stopped for but an hour's rest, then went to work again, weary and heavy-eyed. Bowen was before her, a newspaper spread wide open on his desk. He greeted her with a wan attempt at a smile.

"Luck seems to be against us, don't it, Hilda? Still, I don't know. If we hadn't got through hauling just when we did— You got the insurance fixed all right, didn't you?"

She stared at him. "The insurance?"

"The insurance on the apples! Haven't you heard?" He pushed the paper toward her impatiently. "The Peerless burned last night—they're baked apples now."

Slowly her face paled and her eyes grew wide with horror as she grasped the significance of it all. "What do you mean?" she gasped. "I went home early—I left you a note—I haven't heard

anything—my little brother was sick."

"Yes, but the insurance, the insurance!" His voice was harsh, the fret of his rasped nerves.

She gave a little cry and sank down in her chair, covering her face with her hands.

"No, no," she moaned. "It can't be; it can't be! I won't have it so! Oh, say there's some mistake." She sprang up and grasped him by the wrists. "Say there's some mistake! I tried three times—I couldn't get them. When I went I took the papers with me and stopped there—but they were closed! I've got the receipts with me—I brought them down with me." He turned white and grasped the edge of the desk for support. "Oh, forgive me, forgive me," she wailed. "I should have stayed at the telephone—I never should have stopped trying until I got them." Her voice dropped to an agonized whisper. "It's my fault—my fault. I've ruined you!"

He dropped into a chair, white, sick, beaten. There was no sound in the room but Hilda's bitter sobbing. Presently he spoke. His voice was very gentle, but it trembled and seemed far away.

"Hilda, Hilda, child; don't cry like that—don't. It wasn't your fault; not your fault at all."

"It was—it was," she sobbed.

He rose and went unsteadily to his desk. "What's in the mail this morning?" A subtle change came over him. His eyes glittered and his mouth grew hard. He ripped open envelope after envelope, spread out the checks they contained and began hurriedly to endorse them.

"What are you going to do?" she whispered.

He gave a short laugh. "There's nothing left for me in this town. Here's five hundred dollars in little junk—it'll take me quite a ways from here."

"No, no," cried the girl frantically. "No, you sha'n't do that! You sha'n't!"

His face was dogged. "This wouldn't be a drop in the bucket, girl. What do they all do? Look at Adams—and Weis—and Bucklin! I'll get away from it all—I'll start again somewhere."

"No, No!" She clung desperately to his arm, pushing the fluttering checks away with her elbow. The tears streamed down her face. "Then you would be what that man called you. It would be the truth. And I would be to blame! No, no; you can't! I'll stay with you; I'll help you; I'll work for nothing. I'll do anything—anything! Oh, Roger, Roger, don't run away—like a thief!"

He was trembling. "Do you care, Hilda?" he asked thickly. "Do you care *that way*—dear?"

She bent her bright head, still sobbing.

He drew her to him, then.

"Do you love me, Hilda?" he asked, very gently.

Her answer was inarticulate, but he understood.

"I'm down and out, little girl—down and out." He smoothed her tumbled hair with his fingers. "But I ought to be good for forty a week as a salesman. And with a wife like you—" He broke off irrelevantly. "Do you know I think you've got the prettiest hair I ever saw? It's alive. Many's the time I've ached to touch it. I *hate* hair that looks as if it had been pasted on."

She raised her wet eyes to his, smiling wanly.

"There won't be any automobiles, honey—nor any bright lights—nor any easy times. But if you stick by me—and if I work hard—"

Her head drooped shyly. "And there's mother and Rudie—"

He counted mischievously on his fingers. "And Marie and Pierre. What a family I'm going to have!" He raised her hands and clasped them around his neck.

"And we'll all have—you," she said.



"What makes him think we're goin' to have a cyclone?" inquired Mrs. Macy

Mrs. Macy's Flight

A Susan Clegg Story

BY ANNE WARNER

Author of "Susan Clegg and Her Friend, Mrs. Lathrop," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY C. F. PETERS

I

I D'N' know, I'm sure, what star this town could ever have been laid out under," said Susan Clegg one exceptionally hot night as she sat upon Mrs. Macy's steps, "but my own opinion is as it must have been a comet for we're always skiting along into some sort of hot water. When it aint all of us it's some of us and when it aint some of us it's one of us and now the walls of my house is up I'd be willing to bet a nickel as a calamity'll happen along just because something's always happening here and my walls is the youngest and tenderest thing in the community now."

"Your roof aint—" began Mrs. Lathrop.

"Of course not; how could it be when my walls is only just up? I don't say it wasn't natural that your walls should go up first, Jathrop being your son, and, now that he's rich, no more to me than a benefactor—"

"Oh, Susan!" expostulated Mrs. Macy.

"That's what he is, Mrs. Macy; he's my benefactor and I can't escape if I want to. You may tend a man's mother ten years, day and night, house-cleaning and cistern-cleanings, moths and the well froze up, and if the man comes back rich he's your benefactor—"

"Susan!" cried Mrs. Lathrop, "you—"

"Don't deny it, Mrs. Lathrop; it's the truth. It's one of those truths that the wiser they are the sadder you get. It's one of those truths as is the whole truth and a little left over and I'm learning more every day that I'm to be what's left over. After a life of being independent and living on my own money I'm now going down on my knees learning the lesson of being humbly grateful for what I don't want. I may sound bitter, but if I do it isn't surprising for I feel bitter and Gran'ma Mullins knows I'm always frank and open so she'll excuse my saying that there's nothing in living with *her* as tends to calm me much. A woman as sleeps in a bed as Hiram must have played leap-frog over all his life, from the feel of the springs, and pours out of a pitcher as has got a chip out of the tip of its nose, aint in no mood to mince nothing. I never was one to mince and I never will be—not now and not never. Mincing is for them as aint got it in them to speak their minds freely, and my mind is a thing that's made to be free and not a slave."

"Well, really, Susan," expostulated Mrs. Macy, "what ever—"

"Don't interrupt me, Mrs. Macy. I'm full of goodness knows what, but whatever it is I'm too full of it for comfort. There's nothing in the life I'm leading this summer to make me expect comfort and very little to make me feel full, but there's things as would make a man dying of starvation, bust if he experienced them, and I'm full of such things. I'm full of too much; I never had no idea of being out of my house all summer and now when my walls is up at last and it looks like maybe I'd get back a home-feeling some day soon, I must up and get quite another kind of feeling, a feeling that something is going to happen. It's a very strange feeling and at first I thought it was just some more of Gran'ma Mullins' cooking, but it kept getting stronger and when I was in the square I spoke to Mr. Kimball about it and he says this is cyclone weather and maybe a cyclone is going to happen. He says a man was in town yesterday wanting to

insure everybody against fire and cyclones. Most everybody did it. Mr. Kimball says after the young man got through talking you pretty much had to do it. Them as already had policies with the company could get the word 'cyclone' writ in for a dollar. I guess the young man did a very good day's work. Mr. Kimball says if it's true as there's any cyclone coming nosing about here he wants his dried-apple machine insured anyhow. It's a fine machine and every kind of fruit as is left over each night comes out jam next day while all the vegetables make breakfast food. He says it's a wonder."

"What makes him think we're going to have a cyclone?" inquired Mrs. Macy, anxiously.

"He says the weather is cyclony. And he says if I feel queer that's a sign, for I'm a sensitive nature."

"I never—" said Mrs. Lathrop.

"No, nor me neither, but Mr. Kimball seemed to feel there wasn't no doubt. He says I'm just the kind of sensitive nature as could feel a cyclone; why, he says, cyclones take the roofs off the houses!"

"Ow!" cried Gran'ma Mullins in surprise.

"If one's coming I'm glad to know for I never see one near to," said Mrs. Macy, pensively.

"You wont see it a *tall*," said Susan. "Mr. Kimball says the only safe place in a cyclone is the cellar and pull a kitchen table over you to keep the house from squashing you flat when it caves in, so it goes without saying that you wont get much view."

"My heavens alive!" cried Mrs. Lathrop.

"That's what he said. But he says not to worry for the young man told him as they're getting so common no one notices them any more. He says they're always going hop, skip, and jump over Kansas and nobody pays any attention to 'em out there any more. He knows all about cyclones now. He talked with the young man a full hour. The young man wanted it clear, as he was only insuring for *cyclones*—he says his firm wouldn't have



"A man was in town yesterday wanting to insure everybody against cyclones"

nothing to do with tornadoes. You can get as much on a cyclone as on a fire, but you can't get a penny on a tornado—"

"What's the diff—" asked Gran'ma Mullins.

"That's the trouble—nobody can just tell. A cyclone is wind and lightning mixed by combustion and drove forward by expulsion, the young man told Mr. Kimball. He said they'd got cyclones all worked out and they can average 'em up same as everything else, but he says a tornado is something as no man can get hold of and no man will ever be able to study. Tornadoes drive nails through fences—"

"Where do they get the nails?" asked Gran'ma Mullins.

"I d'n' know; pick 'em out of the fences first, I guess, and they strip the feathers off chickens and scoop up haystacks and carry them up in the air for good and all."

"Oh, my!" cried Mrs. Macy.

"Mr. Kimball said the young man

told him that a tornado dug up a complete marsh once in Minnesota and spread it out upside down on top of a wood a little ways off, and when there's a tornado anywhere near, the sewing-machines all tick like telegraphing."

"No!" cried Mrs. Macy.

"Yes, the young man said so."

"But do you believe him?"

"I don't know why not. I wouldn't believe Mr. Kimball because he's always fixing up his stories to sound better than they really are—which makes me have very little faith in him; Judge Fitch says he'd make a splendid witness for anyone just on that very account; Judge Fitch says with a little well-advised help Mr. Kimball would carry convictions to any man—he don't except none—but I see no reason why the young man wasn't telling the truth—young men do tell the truth sometimes—most everybody does *that*. A tornado catches up pigs and carries 'em miles and pulls up trees by the roots—I don't wonder they wont insure 'em."

"The pigs?" asked Mrs. Macy.

"No, the tornadoes."

"What's the signs of a tornado?" asked Gran'ma Mullins, uneasily.

"Well, the signs is alike for both. The signs is weather like to-day and a kind of breathlessness like to-night. Mr. Kimball says a funnel-shaped cloud is a great sign and when you see it, in three minutes it's on you and off goes your roof if it's a cyclone and off you go yourself if it's a tornado."

"My heavens alive!" cried Mrs. Lathrop, clutching the arms of her old-gold-plush stationary rocker.

"Do people ever come down again?" Gran'ma Mullins inquired; she was very pale.

"Elijah didn't, Mr. Kimball says."

"Elijah Doxey?" cried Mrs. Macy.

"No, Elijah in the Bible, you know, the Elijah as was caught up in a chariot of fire; Mr. Kimball says there aint a mite of doubt in his mind but that it was a tornado. I guess Mr. Kimball told the truth that time for it's all in the Bible."

"That's true," said Gran'ma Mullins. "I remember Elijah myself. He kept a tame raven, seems to me, or some such thing."

"Oh, Susan!" Mrs. Lathrop cried out suddenly, "there's a fun—" Her voice failed her—she raised her hand and pointed.

Susan turned quickly and her face became gray-white. "It can't be a cy—" she faltered.

With that all four women jumped different ways.

"Where shall we go?" shrieked Mrs. Macy. "Oh, saint and sinners preserve us! Oh, Susan, where shall we go?"

But Susan Clegg stood as if paralyzed, staring straight at the funnel-shaped cloud.

Gran'ma Mullins started for her own house; Mrs. Lathrop sprang up and clasped the piazza post nearest; Mrs. Macy grabbed her skirts up both sides and faced the cyclone just as she had once faced a cow.

The funnel-shaped cloud came sweeping towards them; the town was be-

tween, and a darkness and a mighty roar arose; buildings seemed falling; the din was terrible.

"I knew it," said Susan, grimly. "It is a cyclone!" She faced the worst—standing erect.

The next instant the storm was on them all. It lifted Mrs. Lathrop's old-gold-plush, stationary rocker and hurled it at that good lady, smashing her hard against the post; it raised the roof of Mrs. Macy's house and dropped it like an extinguisher over the fleeing form of Gran'ma Mullins.

"Oh, Gran'ma Mullins, it is a cyclone! There goes a roof!" Susan shrieked, but Gran'ma Mullins answered not.

A second mighty burst of fury blew down two trees and blew Susan herself back against the side-wall of the house, which shook and swayed like a bit of card-board.

"Oh, yes, it's a cyclone," Susan screamed over and over. "Oh, Mrs. Lathrop, it's a real cyclone! It aint a tornado; you can see the difference now. It's a cyclone—look at the roof—it's a cyclone!"

Mrs. Lathrop could see nothing. She and the old-gold-plush stationary rocker were all piled together under the piazza post.

And now came the third and worst burst of fury. It crashed on the blacksmith's shop, carried the sails of the wind-mill swooping down the road, and then without halting, without rest, lifted Mrs. Macy with her outspread skirts and carried her straight up in the air. "Oh, Oh!" she shrieked, and sailed forth.

Susan gave a piercing yell. "Oh, Mrs. Macy, you see as it's a tornado, it's a tornado!" But Mrs. Macy answered not.

Tipping, swaying, ducking to the right or left, she flew majestically away, passing over her own prostrate roof first and then over that of Gran'ma Mullins' wood-shed.

"Help, help," cried Gran'ma Mullins from under the roof.

Mrs. Lathrop was oblivious to all, smashed by her own old-gold-plush, stationary rocker.

Susan Clegg stood as one fascinated, staring after the trail, which was all that was left, of Mrs. Macy.

"It is a tornado," she said over and over. "Mrs. Macy'll always believe in the Bible now, I guess. It's a tornado. It's a tornado."

II

"No, they aint found her yet," Susan said the day after Mrs. Macy's flight, coming into the hotel room where Mrs. Lathrop and Gran'ma Mullins had found a pleasant and comfortable refuge and were occupied in recuperating together at Jathrop's expense. Neither lady was seriously injured. Gran'ma Mullins had been preserved from even a wetting through the neat capping of her climax by Mrs. Macy's roof, while Mrs. Lathrop's squeeze between the piazza post and her well beloved old - gold - plush, stationary rocker had not—as Gran'ma Mullins put it—so much as turned a hair of even the rocker.

"No one's heard anything from her yet," continued Susan. "But that aint so surprising as it would be if anybody had time to want to know. But nobody's got time for nothing to-day. The town's in a awful taking and I d'n' know as I ever see a worse situation. You two want to be very grateful as you're so nicely and neatly laid aside, for what has descended on the community now is worse'n any cyclone and if you could get out and see what the cyclone's done you'd know what that means."

"Was you to my house, Susan?" asked Gran'ma Mullins, anxiously.

"I was, but the insurance men was before me—or anyhow we met there."

"The insurance men!"



"I spoke to Mr. Kimball about it"

"That's what I said—the insurance men. Oh, Mrs. Lathrop, we all know one side of what it is to insure ourselves, but now the Lord, in his infinite wrath, has mercifully seen fit to show us the other side. The Assyrian pouncing down on the wolf in his fold is a young mother wrapping up her first baby to look out the window, compared to those insurance men. They descended on us bright and shining to-day, and if we was murderers with our families buried under the kitchen floor we couldn't be looked on with more suspicion. I was far from pleased when I first laid eyes on 'em, for there's

a foxiness in any city man as comes to settle things in the country as is far from being either soothing or sirupy to him as lives in the country, but you can maybe imagine my feelings when they very plainly informed me as I couldn't put the roof back on Mrs. Macy's house till it was settled whether it was a cyclone or a tornado—"

"Settled whether it's a—" cried Mrs. Lathrop.

"Cyclone or tornado," repeated Susan. "The first thing aint to get to rights, but it is to settle whether we've got any rights to get. I never dreamed what it was to be insured—no, or no one else neither; seems if it's a tornado we don't get a cent of our insurance. And to think it all depends on Mrs. Macy."

"On Mrs.—" cried Gran'ma Mullins.

"Yes, because she's the only one as really knows whether she was carried off or not. Until she comes back and says so, seems there's really no legal proof as she was ever carried off. Well, all I can say is, if she don't come back pretty quick we're going to have a little John Brown raid right here in town, we—"

"But what—"

"I'm telling you. It'll be the town rising up against the insurance men and the insurance men will soon find that when it comes to dilly-dallying with folks newly cycloned upside-down, it's life and death if you don't deal fair. What with chimneys down and roofs turned up at the corner like the in-

quiring angels didn't have time to take the cover all off but just pried up a little to see what was inside—I say with all this and everything wet and Mrs. Macy gone, this community was in no mood to be sealed up—"

"Sealed up!" cried Mrs. Lathrop and Gran'ma Mullins together.

"That's what it is. Sealed up, we are, and sealed up we've got to stay until Mrs. Macy gets back—"

"But—" cried Gran'ma Mullins.

"Everybody's just as mad as you are. Charging bulls is setting hens beside this town to-night. Even Mr. Kimball's mad for once in his life; he's losing money most awful, for he can't sell so much as a paper of tacks. They've got both his doors and all his windows sealed, and he's standing out in front

with nothing to do except to keep a sharp eye out for Mrs. Macy. He says it aint in reason to expect as she'll fly back, but she's got to come from somewhere and he means to prevent her getting away again on the sly. He says his opinion is as she'd have stood a better chance before airships was so common; he says ten years ago folks would have took steps for hooking at her just as quick as they saw her coming along, but nowadays it'd be a pretty brave man as would try to stop anything he saw flying overhead. I guess he's about right there. It's a hard question to know what to do with things that fly even if Mrs. Macy hadn't took to it,



"There's a foxiness in any city man"



"Mr. Weskins says if Mrs. Macy don't come back there'll be no way to prove as she was even carried off."

too. My view is as we advance faster than we can learn how to manage our own new inventions. I d'n' know, I'm sure, what Mrs. Macy is going to do about this trip of hers. She went without even the moment's notice as folks in a hurry always has had up to now. She's been gone most twenty-four hours; she's skipped three meals already not to speak of her night and her nap and you know as well as I do how Mrs. Macy was give to her nights and her naps."

Susan shook her head, and Mrs. Lathrop looked wide-eyed and alarmed.

"But now—" Gran'ma Mullins asked.

"I've been all over the place," Susan continued. "I didn't understand fully what was up when I scurried off to try and get those men to put the roof back on Mrs. Macy's house, but I know it all now. It's no use trying to get anybody to do nothing now—the whole town's upside down and inside out. I never see nothing like it. And the insurance men

has got it laid down flat as nobody can't touch nothing till it's settled whether it's a cyclone or a tornado. Seems a good many was insured for cyclones right in with their fires anyway without ever having known it, but there aint a soul in the place insured against a tornado because you can't get any insurance against tornadoes—no one will insure them. The insurance men say if it's a tornado we wont have nothing to do except to do the best we can, but if it's a cyclone we mus'n't touch anything till they can get some one to judge what's worth saving and how much it's worth and deduct that from our insurance. That's how it is."

"How long—" demanded Mrs. Lathrop.

"Nobody knows," said Susan. "The whole town is asking and nobody knows. The insurance company wont let anybody go home or get anything unless they'll sign a paper giving up their insurance and swearing that it was a tor-

nado. Mr. Dill just *had* to sign the paper, because he was taking a bath and had nothing except the table-cover to wear. He signed the paper and said he'd swear anything if only for his shoes alone and it seems that his house aint hurt a mite and he didn't have no insurance anyhow. A good many is feeling very bitter towards him about it, but he says he really couldn't think in the excitement and the table-cloth. It's a awful state of things. The cyclone has tore everything to pieces and the insurance men has put their seal on the chips. People is being drove to all lengths. The minister and his family is camping in the hen-house. Our walls is fell in, so goodness knows what will happen to you and me next, Mrs. Lathrop. The wires is all down, so we can't hear nothing about the storm. The rails is all up, so there's no trains. The church is stove in, so we can't pray. And I must say, as to my order of thinking, it looks as if no one feels like praying. The insurance men is running all over like winged ants hatching out, sealing up more doors and more windows every minute, and getting more signatures as it was a tornado before they'll unstick them. Nothing can't be really settled till Mrs. Macy comes back. Mrs. Macy is the key to the whole situation."

"But why—" asked Mrs. Lathrop.

"The Jilkinses is in from Cherry Pond and all it did there was to rain. The Sperritses was in, too, and the storm was most singular with them; it hailed in the sunshine till they see four rainbows—they never see the beat. Mr. Weskins is advising everybody to go into their houses and make a test case of it. Judge Fitch is advising everybody not to. It's plain as he's on the side of the insurance men. He says, just as they do, that we'd better wait till Mrs. Macy comes back and hear her story; he says in the very nature of things her view'll be a most general one. He says all there is to know *she'll* know; she'll know the area affected and be able to tell whether it was electricity or just wind. Mr. Kimball said if she went far enough she'd be a star-witness, but no one thinks

jokes about Mrs. Macy ought to be told now; the situation is too serious. It may be *very* serious for Mrs. Macy. If the storm stopped sudden it may be very serious indeed for Mrs. Macy. Mrs. Macy aint as young as she was and she hadn't the least idea of leaving town—she wasn't a bit prepared—that we can all swear to. She was just carried away by a sudden impulse—as you might say—and the main question is how far did she get on her impulse and where did it let her down? To my order of thinking it all depends on how she come down. Cycloning along like she was, if she come down on a pond or a peak she'll be far from finding it funny. I was thinking about her all the way here and I can't think of any way as'll be easy for her to come to earth, no matter how she comes. And if she hits hard she aint going to like it. Mrs. Macy was never one as took a joke pleasant; she never made light of nothing. She took life very solemn-like—a owl was a laughing hyena compared to Mrs. Macy. It's too bad she was that way. My own view is as she never got over not getting married again. Some women don't. She always took it as a reflection. There's no reflection to not getting married; my opinion is as there's a deal of things more important and most things is more comfortable. If Mrs. Macy was married she'd be much worse off than she is right now, for instead of being able to give her whole time and attention to whatever she's doing and looking over, she'd be wondering what he was giving his time and attention to doing and prying into. When a man's out of your sight you've always got to wonder, and most of the time that's all in the world you *can* do about a man. Now Mrs. Macy's perfectly independent; she can go where she pleases and come down when she pleases, and she hasn't got to tell what she saw unless she wants to. Mrs. Brown says *she* aint never been nowhere. It's plain to be seen, as Mrs. Brown's envying Mrs. Macy her trip."

"But why—" began to interpose Gran'ma Mullins with great determination.

"That's just it," replied Susan promptly. "I declare, I can't but wonder what will happen next. I'm in that state that nothing will surprise me. Everything's so upset and off the track it's no use even trying to think. My walls is fell into my cistern and Mrs. Macy's roof is sitting on the ground beside her house, yet. The insurance men has sealed up Gran'ma Mullins' house and they wouldn't leave the hen-house open till I signed a affidavit on behalf of the hens and released 'em from all claims. Mr. Dill said they tried to seal up his cow; they've got Mr. Kimball's dried apple-machine tied with a rope. It's awful."

"But, Susan—" interrupted Gran'ma Mullins.

"Mr. Weskins says the great difficulty is, the insurance men say they don't see how anything is going to be settled or decided until we hear from Mrs. Macy. The point's right here—if she comes back it's evidence as it was a tornado, because if she comes back it proves as she was carried off—in which case the insurance men wont have to pay nothing anyhow and we'll all be unsealed and allowed to go to work putting our roofs back on our heads and clearing up as fast as we can. But Mr. Weskins says if Mrs. Macy don't come back there'll be no way to prove as she was even carried off by the storm, for you" (to Mrs. Lathrop) "had your back turned, and you" (to Gran'ma Mullins) "was under the roof, and I'm the only one as could see and it takes two witnesses to prove anything as is contrary to law and nature."

"Do they doubt—" cried Mrs. Lathrop, quite excited—for her.

"Yes, they do. They doubt everything. Insurance men wont have to pay, nothing granted. They've decided to just pin their whole case to Mrs. Macy and there's Mrs. Macy gone away to heaven knows where."

"Well, Susan," said Gran'ma Mullins, "we must look on the bright side. Mrs. Macy'll have something to talk

about as'll always interest everybody, if she does come back, and if she don't come back we'll always have her to remember."

"Yes, and if we don't get our houses un-stuck pretty soon we'll *long* remember her," said Susan darkly.

III

Three days were nearly passed by and no word from Mrs. Macy. As soon as the telegraph assumed its usual route messages were sent all over in the direction whence she had flown, but not a trace of her was discovered by anyone.

The town was very much wrought up, for, although its members were given to having strange experiences, no experience as strange as this had ever happened there before. The aggravations of being barred out of the house and home of each until Mrs. Macy should be found naturally heightened the interest. Susan was much wrought up.

"Well, Mrs. Lathrop," she said on the afternoon of the third day, as she came into the hotel room where Jathrop's mother was now equal to her usual vigorous exercise in her newly mended



"Mr. Dill had nothing but a table cover to wear"

old-gold-plush, stationary rocker — "Well, Mrs. Lathrop, you may well be grateful as Jathrop has got money enough for us to be living here, for the living of the community is getting to be no living a *tall*."

Gran'ma Mullins, still in bed, turned herself about and manifested a vivid interest. "Susan," she said, solemnly, "it's three days now; how long is this going to keep up?"

"It can't keep up very much longer or we'll have, not a John Brown raid, but a new French Revolution, that's what we'll have," said Susan. "Why, the community is getting where it wont stand even being said good-morning to pleasantly. The children is running all over pulling each other's hair and Deacon White says he's going to buy a pistol. Things is come to a pretty pass when Deacon White wants to buy a pistol for he's just as afraid of one end as the other. But it's a straw as shows which way the cyclone blew *his* house."

"But isn't something going to be—"

"Something has got to be done. The boys stretched a string across the door to the insurance men's room this morning so they all fell in a heap when they started down town. Some one as nobody can locate poured a pitcher of ice-water through the ventilator as is over their bed last night. I guess they begin to see then as public feeling is on the rise, for right after breakfast they sent for the appraisers and they're going to begin appraising and un-sealing to-morrow morning. They've entirely give up the idea of waiting for Mrs. Macy. The town just wont stand for any more hanging around waiting for nothing. I never see us so before. Everyone is so upset and divided in his feelings that some think we'd ought to horsewhip the insurance men and some think we'd ought to hold a burial service for Mrs. Macy."

"I wouldn't see any good in holding a service for Mrs. Macy," said Gran'ma Mullins. "She wouldn't have been buried here if she was dead—she was always planning to go to Meadville when she was dead."

"Yes," said Susan, "I know. Because Mrs. Lupey's got that nice lot with that nice mausoleum as she bought from the Pennybackers when they got rich, and moved even their great-grandfather to the city."

"I remember the Pennnybackers," said Gran'ma Mullins. "Old man Pennybacker used to drive a cart for rags. It was a great day for the Pennybackers when Joe went into the pawnbroker business."

"Yes," said Susan, "it's wonderful how rich men manage to get on when they're young. Seems as if there's just no way to crowd a millionaire out of business or kill him off when he's young. I'm always reading what they went through in the papers, but it never helped none. A millionaire is a thing as if it's going to be is going to be and you've just got to let 'em do it once they get started."

"It was a nice mausoleum," said Gran'ma Mullins, reflectively. "Mrs. Macy has told me about it a hundred times. It's so big, Mrs. Lupey says she can live up to her hospitable nature at last for there's room for all and to spare. Mrs. Macy was the first person she asked. Mrs. Macy thought that was very kind of just a cousin. There's only Mrs. Kitts there, now, and Mrs. Lupey's aunt, Mrs. Cogetts."

"Mrs. Macy didn't know she had a aunt," said Susan, also reflectively. "Mrs. Cogetts came way from Tacoma just on account of the mausoleum. That's a long ways to come just to save paying for a lot where you are—seems to me—but some natures'll go any lengths to save money."

"I wonder where Mrs. Macy is now," said Gran'ma Mullins with a sigh.

"Nobody knows. The insurance men is very blue over her not coming back, for they expected to prove a tornado sure—but even insurance men can't have the whole world run to suit them these days. Anyhow, my view is as it's no use worrying. Spilt milk's a poor thing to cook with. If you're in the fire you aint in the frying-pan. The real sufferers is this community as is all locked out of



"Mrs. Macy as snug as a moth in a rug cooking her meals on the little oil stove"

their houses. The Browns is living in the cellar to the cow-shed, with two lengths of side-walk laid over them. Mrs. Brown says she feels like a Pilgrim Father and she sees why they got killed off so fast by the Indians—it'd be so much easier to be scalped than to do your hair under some circumstances. Mr. and Mrs. Craig takes turns at one hammock all night long. Mrs. Craig says they change regular, for whoever starts to turn over spills out and the other one as is sitting looking at the moon and waiting gets right in."

"I declare, Susan," said Gran'ma Mullins, warmly. "I think it's most shocking. I won't say outrageous, but I will say shocking."

"But what are you going to do about it?" said Susan. "That's the rub in this country. There's plenty as is shocking but here we sit at the mercy of any cyclone or Congress as comes along. Here we was, peaceful, happy and loving, and along comes a cyclone and swishes

through us, and then down comes half a dozen men from the city and seals up everything in town. I tell you you ought to have heard me when they was sealing up your house and Mrs. Macy's; I give it to 'em, and I didn't mince matters none. I spoke my whole mind and it was a great satisfaction, but they went right on and sealed up the houses."

"Oh, Susan," began Mrs. Lathrop, "how are—"

"All in ruins," replied Susan, promptly. "I don't believe you and me is ever going to live in happy homes any more. Fate seems dead set against the idea. And nobody can get ahead of Fate. They may talk all they please about overcoming, and when I was young I was always charging along with my horns down and my tail waving, same as every other young thing, but I'm older now and I see as resignation is the only thing as really pays in the end. I get as mad as ever but I stay meek. I wanted to lam those insurance men with a stick

of wood as was lying most handy, but all I did was to walk home. Mr. Shores says he's just the same way. We was talking it over this morning. He says when his wife first run off with his clerk he was nigh to crazy; he says he thought getting along without a wife was going to just drive him out of his senses and he said her taking the clerk just seemed to add insult to perjury, but he says now, as he gets older, he finds having no wife a great comfort; he says only a married man really knows what a wife is—he says it aint possible for a single man to form the least idea."

It was the next morning that Mrs. Macy reappeared on the scene. The insurance men had unsealed all the houses and the result was her discovery.

"Well, you could drown me for a new-born kitten and I'll never open my eyes in surprise after *this*," Susan Clegg expounded to the friends at the hotel. "But Mrs. Macy always *was* peculiar; she was always give to adventures! To think of her living there as snug as a moth in a rug, cooking her meals on the little oil stove—"

"But where—" interrupted Mrs. Lathrop.

"I'm telling you. She's been sleeping in a good bed, too, and being perfectly comfortable while we've all been suffering along, waiting for her to come back—"

"But, Susan—" cried Gran'ma Mullins, wide-eyed.

"I'll tell you where she was—she was *in your house*, that's where she was. The cyclone just gave her one lift over your woodshed and then it set her down pretty quick. She says she came to earth like a piece of thistle-down on the other side. Her story is as your back door was open so she run in and then it begin to rain, so she saw no reason for going out again. When it stopped raining she looked out and see nobody. That aint surprising, for we wasn't there. She thought that it was strange not seeing any lights opposite, but she started to go home and she says *what* was her feeling

when she fell over her own roof in the path! She says of all the strange sensations a perfectly respectable woman can possibly ever get, to start to go home and fall over your own roof is surely the most singular. She says she was so sleepy she thought maybe she was dreaming, and not having any lantern it was no use trying to investigate, so she just went back to your house and went to bed in my bed!"

"Where is—" pursued Mrs. Lathrop.

"Oh, she's gone straight over to Meadville," said Susan. "Oh my, but she says her feelings as she sat inside that nice, comfortable house and realized that she was the only person in town with a roof over her head! You see, she heard me talking with the insurance men and she didn't know why we was to be sealed up, but she got it all straight as we was going to be turned out of house and home and she says she made up her mind as no one should ever know as she was in a house and so come capering up to put her out. She says she settled down as still as a mouse, made no smoke and never lit so much as a candle, nights. Mrs. Macy is surely most foxy!"

"And she's gone to Meadville," said Gran'ma Mullins.

"Yes, she didn't want to pay board here and her own house hasn't got no roof, so she's gone to Mrs. Lupey. Old Dr. Carter was over here to appraise the damage done to folks and he took her back with him."

"I wonder if she'll ever—" wondered Gran'ma Mullins.

"I d'n' know. If folks talk about a marriage long enough it usually ends up that way. Dr. Carter and Mrs. Macy has been kind of jumping at each other and then running away for fifteen years or so. They say he'd like her money, but he'd hate to have her around all the time."

"She wouldn't like him to be either," said Gran'ma Mullins.

"I know," said Susan, "that's what's makin' so few people like to get married nowadays. They don't want to be bothered with each other."

Lauren Pullman as
Little Peter

Photograph by
Sarony, New York

Richard Bennett as
Peter Waverton in
"Passers-By"



PLAYS AND PLAYERS

by Louis V. De Foe

FIRST it was the stenographer. Next came the manicure. Now it is the telephone girl whose professional woes are claiming the attention of the stage.

One may wonder what there can be in the dull routine of that nameless voice, the "central" at the switchboard where meet the electric fibers of every community, that can serve as an inspiration to the dramatist. In the monotonous reiteration of her daily task, what is it that may become a commanding force which decides the fates of others? For the answer consider with me "The Woman," the drama of Mr. William C. DeMille which, in the Belascoan wizardry of its production, has stepped a pace beyond the front rank of the new plays of the early season.

The perfection of detail with which

Mr. David Belasco has set "The Woman" before the footlights imparts to it an importance which inherently it probably does not possess. The comment is not meant in disparagement of Mr. DeMille, for on any other stage his play would meet with success. But in the Belasco handling, while not less a drama of the heart, it becomes also a faithful transcript of actual life.

Political graft serves as a background for the story, the scenes of which are laid in the lobby of a Washington hotel. At one side is the "amen corner," with its open fire and circle of comfortable, leather-upholstered chairs. Close by is the telephone switchboard at which sits *Wanda Kelly*, bantering over the wires or occupying her idle moments with her embroidery frame, after the manner of

her kind. The casual life of the transient hotel is minutely reproduced. Page boys and porters come and go. Guests saunter through the corridors or pass up and down the stairs. *Wanda* is the least observed, as she is also the least obtrusive, of all. But make a mental note of this wisp of a girl. If she is not the woman of the title she is to become THE WOMAN of the plot.

The conversation of a group around the fireplace discloses that a conspiracy is on foot among the leaders of the dominant party in the House to rush through a dishonest bill which will legalize the over-capitalization of railroads. The coterie fathering the measure is led by *Jim Blake*, a representative from Illinois, his son-in-law, *Mark Robertson*, from New York, and other congressmen from Kansas and Pennsylvania. It appears that they are being opposed by *Matthew Standish*, an insurgent in the party, who has scented graft in the measure and has marshaled his forces to defeat it.

Standish, the regulars admit, is in command of the situation. His victory will mean their political extinction and, perhaps, prison sentences. Their plight has become so desperate that *Standish* must be defeated whether by fair means or foul. Only one resort is left. *Blake* has unearthed a scandal in the insurgent Congressman's past life, the airing of which will ruin his moral standing before the House. A few years before he had been the companion of a woman not his wife at a hotel. The story is ready for the newspapers, but the one essential detail, without which it cannot be printed—the name of the woman—is lacking.

Standish is summoned to the conference and it is made clear to him that, unless he withdraws his opposition and permits the passage of the bill, he will be hopelessly disgraced. He is not, however, of a fiber that yields to threats and retorts that, disgrace or no disgrace, he intends to expose the corruption of the ring. The scene is vividly handled and the deadlock seems complete, for without the name of the woman the others dare not proceed.

Blake and his crowd have purposely conducted their conference in loud voices for *Wanda's* benefit. They have surmised that *Standish*, when he learns that his companion in the hotel episode is in danger, will attempt to warn her over the telephone. When he leaves, they approach the girl with an offer of a bribe if she will disclose the number of the New York call, should their victim fall into the trap. *Wanda* hesitates. There is something in her mind that *Blake* and the rest do not suspect. The reason that she is at the switchboard working for small pay is that her father was ruined by the political machine. *Blake's* son, *Tom*, who is not an admirer of his father's methods, has also formed an attachment for her which she is beginning to reciprocate.

The expected happens when *Standish* hurries back to the booth after the regulars have left.

"Will you please get me Plaza, Number 1001 on the long distance wire to New York?" he asks. Then, on second thought, he adds, "And will you kindly remove your receiver while I am talking?"

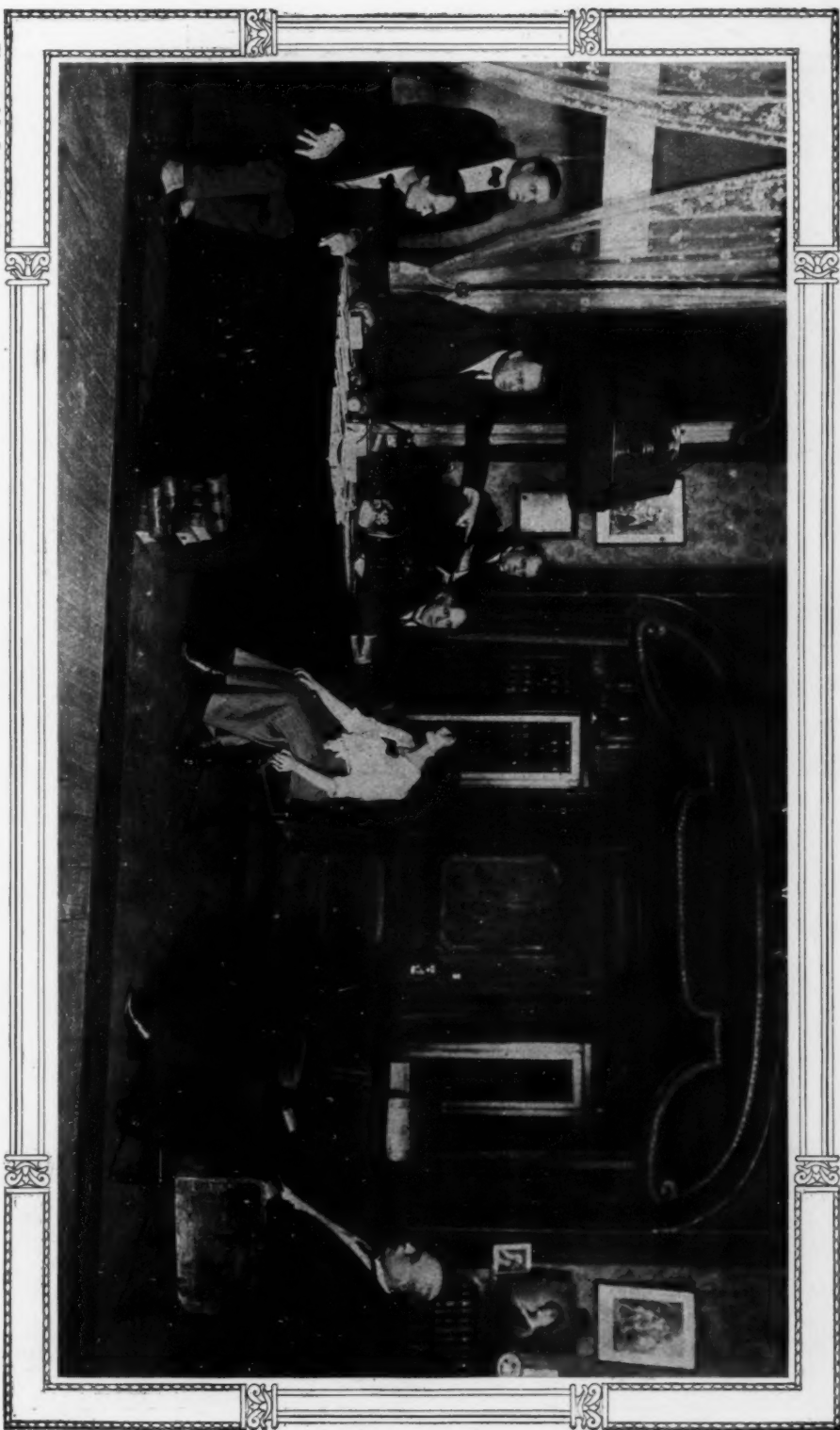
Scarcely has he left the long distance booth when Congressman *Mark Robertson* steps up to the telephone desk.

"I want to talk to my wife in New York who is coming over to Washington this afternoon," he says. "Please call up Plaza, Number 1001."

It takes the girl but a second to guess the truth.

In the succeeding act the ring is in confusion. *Wanda* has refused to accept the bribe. She has also declined to give up the coveted number, as she says, for reasons that are personal and her own. She has likewise destroyed the record of *Standish's* telephone call on her reports and has frustrated another of *Blake's* schemes by breaking his telephone connection with the Associated Press correspondent.

Meanwhile *Mrs. Robertson* has arrived at the hotel and has treated *Wanda* with disdain when the girl has gone to her room to assure her that she will not be exposed. And the gravity of the woman's predicament increases when, in



Photograph by Byron, New York
 Stephen Fitzpatrick (seated) as *Congressman Strong*; Edwin Holt as *Mark Robertson*; William Holden as *Congressman Nelson*; Carlton Macy as *Ralph Van Dyke*;
 Mary Nash as *Wanda Kelly*; John W. Cope as *Jim Blake* in "The Woman"



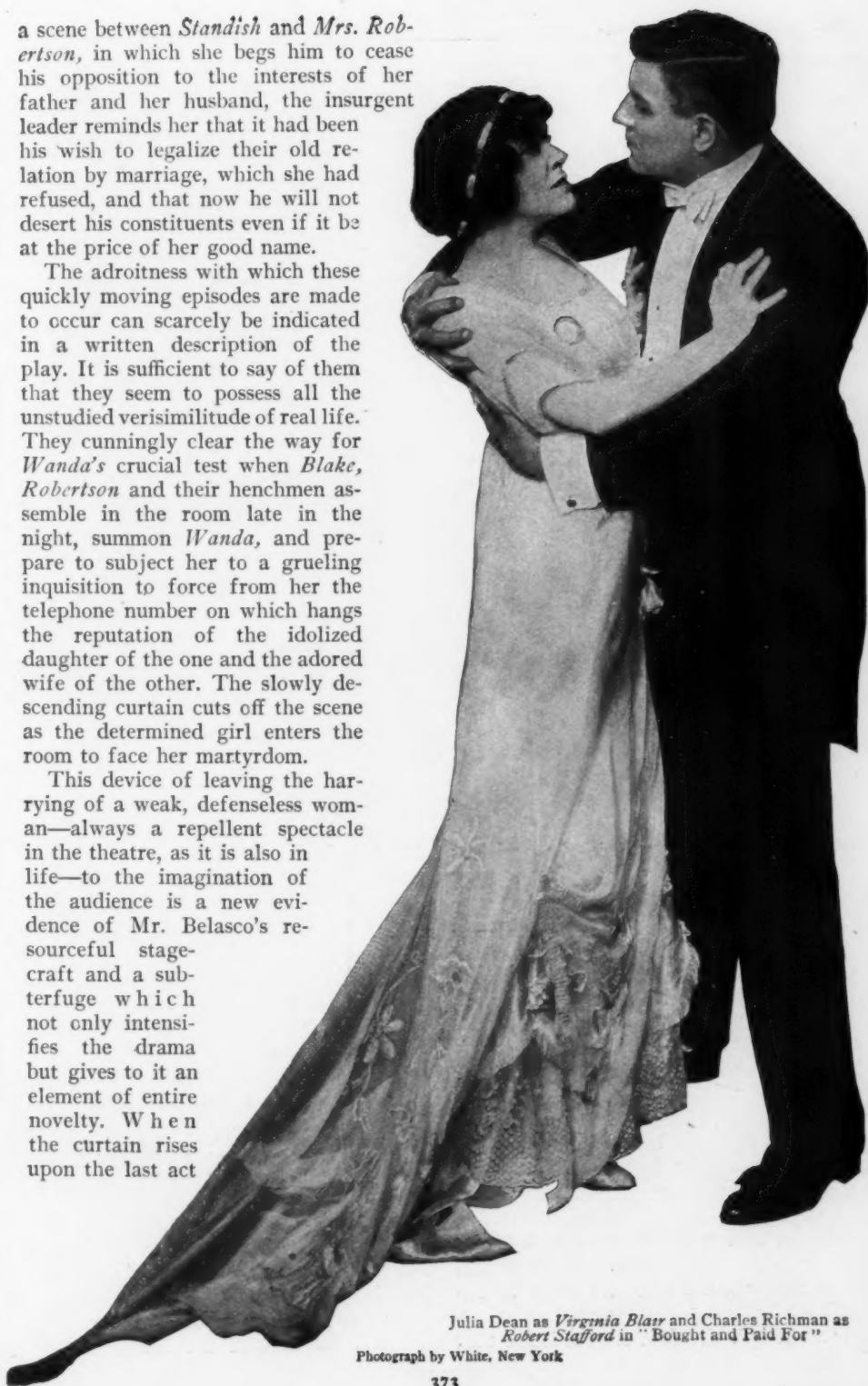
Photograph by Byron, New York.

John W. Cope as *Jim Blake* and Mary Nash as *Wanda Kelly* in "The Woman"

a scene between *Standish* and *Mrs. Robertson*, in which she begs him to cease his opposition to the interests of her father and her husband, the insurgent leader reminds her that it had been his wish to legalize their old relation by marriage, which she had refused, and that now he will not desert his constituents even if it be at the price of her good name.

The adroitness with which these quickly moving episodes are made to occur can scarcely be indicated in a written description of the play. It is sufficient to say of them that they seem to possess all the unstudied verisimilitude of real life. They cunningly clear the way for *Wanda's* crucial test when *Blake, Robertson* and their henchmen assemble in the room late in the night, summon *Wanda*, and prepare to subject her to a grueling inquisition to force from her the telephone number on which hangs the reputation of the idolized daughter of the one and the adored wife of the other. The slowly descending curtain cuts off the scene as the determined girl enters the room to face her martyrdom.

This device of leaving the harrying of a weak, defenseless woman—always a repellent spectacle in the theatre, as it is also in life—to the imagination of the audience is a new evidence of Mr. Belasco's resourceful stagecraft and a subterfuge which not only intensifies the drama but gives to it an element of entire novelty. When the curtain rises upon the last act



Julia Dean as *Virginia Blair* and Charles Richman as *Robert Stafford* in "Bought and Paid For"

Photograph by White, New York



Photograph by White, New York

Marie Nordstrom as *Fanny Blair*; Julia Dean as *Virginia Blair*; Frank Craven as *James Galley* in "Bought and Paid For"

the inquisitors are still in the positions in which they were last seen. With her tear-stained face set in grim determination, *Wanda*, exhausted by her ordeal, still sits among them.

Offers of bribes and promises of other rewards, have failed to influence her. Bullying and abuse have not shaken her stubbornness. As a final resort she is threatened with arrest for destroying her reports and interfering with telephone connections. Still she will not budge. And all through the ordeal the wife, whose name is so badly needed, stands listening in the agony of terror at the door. *Blake's* son, *Tom*, has interceded for the girl without avail and *Grace Robertson*, unable to endure the strain, has finally burst into the room to implore pity.

At length the fact is mentioned that

Mark Robertson has talked over the telephone with his wife about the time *Standish* was at the 'phone. A keen corporation lawyer in the group instantly surmises *Wanda's* deductions and tactfully calls a halt to the inquisitorial proceedings. It remains then for the wife herself to confirm this suspicion when she is left alone with her husband. But meanwhile the dishonest bill has been defeated in the House and *Standish's* party is triumphant.

The powerful but restrained emotional acting of *Wanda* by Miss Mary Nash is one of the play's greatest assets, although the rôles of *Jim Blake* by Mr. J. W. Cope, *Mark Robertson* by Edwin Holt, *Matthew Standish* by Mr. Cuyler Hastings, and *Mrs. Robertson* by Miss Jane Peyton are also capitally performed. So faithful are the details of



Photograph by White, New York

Charles Richman as *Robert Stafford* and Julia Dean as *Virginia Blair* in "Bought and Paid For"

"The Woman" to Washington political life that the section of the country from which each congressman is supposed to hail is revealed instantly by his dress and manner.

A TELEPHONE girl also supplies the serious complication in Mr. George Broadhurst's new comedy, "Bought and Paid For," which not only is rivaling the Belasco production in point of popularity, but is proving itself to be the most diverting play, not even excepting "The Man of the Hour," that its author has turned out. This similarity of leading characters, however, is attended by a difference.

Mr. Broadhurst's play is a comedy drama of contemporary New York life. It follows, but does not copy, the terse, vivid reportorial style which Mr. Eugene Walter adopted to such good advantage in "Paid in Full" and "The Easiest Way," but unlike these two notable successes of the recent past, its humorous quality is largely responsible for its interest. There is one scene in it which will prove very unpalatable to sensitive tastes, but it does not obtrude sufficiently to injure the piece's general attractiveness. The dialogue is extremely facile and among the well-drawn characters there is one, *James Gilley*, a shipping clerk, the meanest—and also most amus-



Photograph by White, New York. Copyright, 1911 by Charles Frohman

Louise Rutter as *Margaret Summers* and Ivy Herzog as *Lady Hurley* in "Passers-By"

ing—of all contemptible stage parasites, who is absolutely true to life and practically a new stage creation.

You are introduced to the principal personages in the bachelor apartment of *Robert Stafford*, a self-made man, a power in the financial world and normally a gentleman of refinement and kindness. But the nervous tension of his life plunges him into periodical drunkenness, during which the Jekyll in his nature becomes completely dominated by the Hyde.

Stafford has formed the acquaintance of *Virginia Blair*, a telephone operator employed in a hotel. He has invited her and her sister, *Fanny*, a vulgar little milliner's assistant, to dine as his guests at his apartment, and *Gilley*, the parasite, who is engaged to marry *Fanny*, has been brought along as an unavoidable evil.

There is ample opportunity to form a close acquaintance with these characters in the opening act as they wait for *Stafford*, who has been detained by a business engagement. *Virginia*, you observe,

is as sensitive and gentle as her sister, *Fanny*, is vulgar and forward. *Fanny*, in fact, is a well-chosen helpmate for *Gilley*, the fourteen-dollar-a-week shipping clerk whose nature is as mean as his egotism is great, and who is always on the look-out for a "chance" to show that he has ideas which will transform the world. By the time *Stafford* arrives, thanks to Mr. Broadhurst's cleverness in planning his preliminaries, you are on terms of intimate understanding with his characters. The humorous dialogue with which the introductions have been made is highly amusing, especially in a side-splitting scene in which the inquisitive *Gilley* breaks one of *Stafford's* priceless vases and makes a frantic effort to put the pieces together while he and *Fanny* speculate ruefully on its value and the strain it will put upon their fourteen-a-week to replace it.

In the next act *Virginia*, who has now been *Stafford's* wife for two years, is living in luxurious surroundings. So, also, from their own point of view, are the wedded *Fanny* and *Gilley*. The four-

teen-dollar-a-week shipping clerk by this time has squirmed into his brother-in-law's employ at one hundred a week, though he still considers himself outrageously underpaid and is as confident as ever of his ability to electrify the world if only some one will recognize his ability and give him a chance.

But *Virginia*, in spite of her release from poverty, is unhappy. *Stafford*, who is kind and considerate when in a normal condition, is a monster of passion when in his cups.

When he comes staggering home in the night, the transformed man is revealed in all his repulsiveness as he attempts to force his unwelcome caresses upon his wife. She seeks to humor and placate him, but when at last she recoils in disgust he reminds her that she was in poverty when he married her and taunts that he "has bought and paid for her." She rushes in disgust from the room and he pursues her in passionate frenzy, smashing the panel of her bed-room door.

This spectacle has had no equal on the stage in its literal repulsiveness since the old days of Pintero's "Iris." In its animal brutality it is an almost unforgivable blemish on the play. After it, next morning, when *Stafford*, now nervous and exhausted, is in a mood of contrition, comes an emotional scene more powerful because of its modera-



Photograph by Sarony, New York
Ernest Lawford as the *Tramp* and
Richard Bennett as *Peter Waver-*
ton in "Passers-By"

tion, in which *Virginia* reminds her husband that, although, as he says, she may have been bought and paid for, her self-respect is still her own and that, unless he gives her his promise to leave off intoxicants, she will separate from him and return to her old life. The promise is not made. The instinct of the man of business overrides the impulse of the husband. *Stafford* replies that he is not certain that his promise, even if given, could be kept and in all events he will remain the absolute head of his own household. *Virginia* thereupon proves as good as her word and in a well handled though somewhat conventional emotional scene walks sadly out of the door.

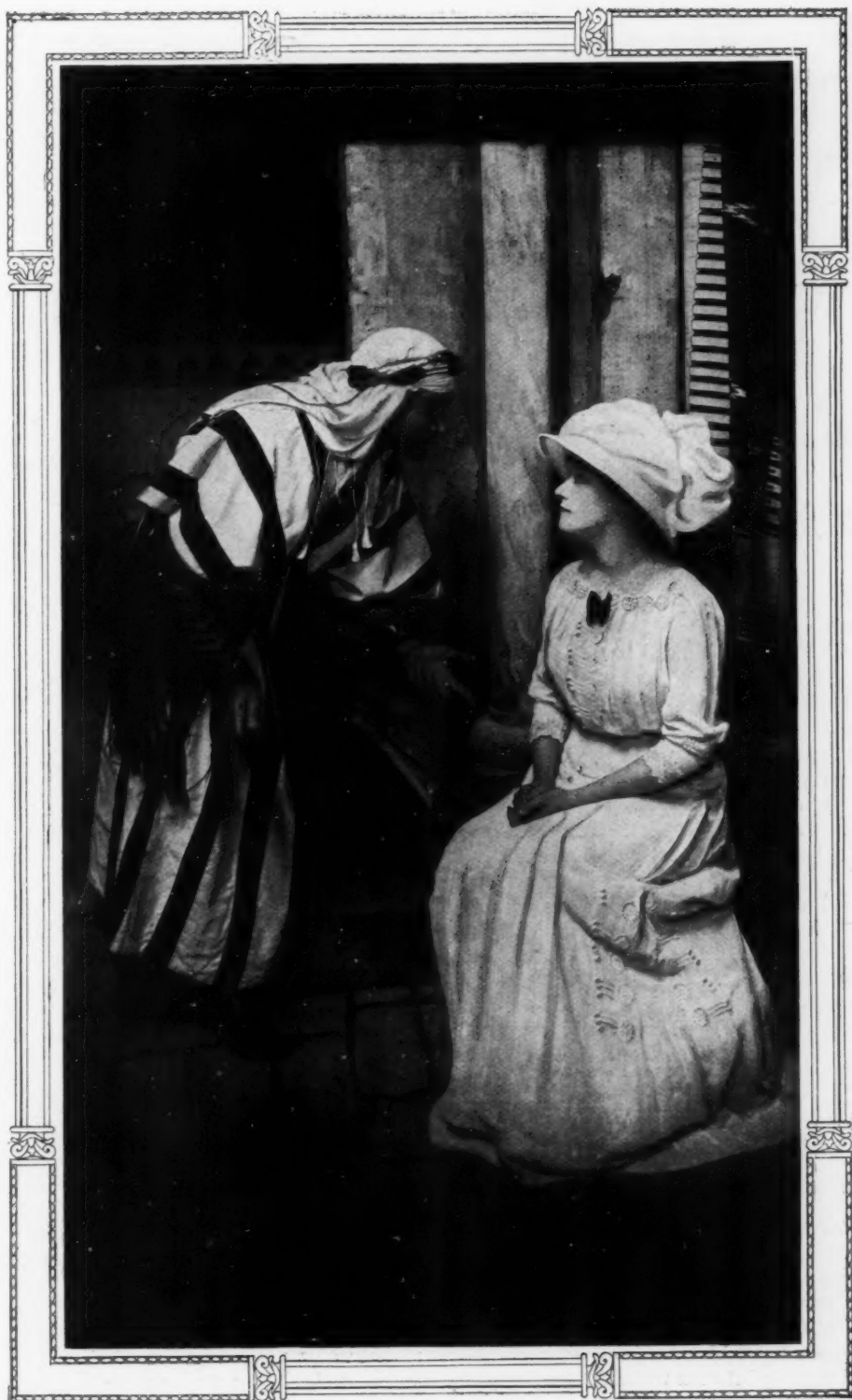
In its final act the play abruptly returns to its earlier humorous vein. *Virginia*, again a telephone girl, is living now in *Gilley's* cheap flat. Its liege lord, the little parasite, is in terror lest the smash in his brother-in-law's domestic affairs will lose for him his one-hundred-a-week job. So he concocts one of those brilliant ideas for which he is famous and which brings the play to an end. He merely lies to *Stafford*, saying that *Virginia* desires to see him. At the meeting of husband and wife no promises are asked or given, but it is made plain that *Stafford's* lesson has been learned. As for *Gilley*, there is rejoicing, not because a reconciliation has come, but for the reason that his hundred-a-week has been saved from jeopardy.

Mr. Charles Richman plays the rôle of *Stafford* with greater ease and force than he has exhibited in any other of his serious characters during the last five years, while Miss Julia Dean gives gracious charm and sympathetic appeal to *Virginia*. There is also a ring of mental anguish in her emotional moments. But the finest performance of all, and the one which is bringing audiences flocking to the play, is by Mr. Frank Craven, who acts *Gilley* to the life and provides an antidote for the repulsive scene of the second act. In this humorous rôle he is cleverly backed by Miss Marie Nordstrom as the vulgar *Fanny* who has a hard time living up to the dignity and responsibility of a hundred a week.

THE most attractive of the new season's importations from the London stage in its sure divination of character, its quaint and spontaneous humor, and its delicate and appealing charm is "Passers-By"—which, after all, is not surprising since its author is Mr. C. Hadden Chambers, whose gifts as a playwright are broad enough to produce such widely dissimilar works as "Captain Swift" and "The Tyranny of Tears." The comedy is not without its faults for it turns upon a very doubtful coincidence. But its human quality is so pronounced and its observation of life is so shrewd that it will scarcely fail to repeat in America the abundant success it has already experienced in England.

The locale is London; the time is the present, and the bachelor flat of *Peter Waverton* is the scene. *Waverton's* valet, *Pine*, an amateur student of human nature, is in the habit of inviting into the flat, in the owner's absence, the queer specimens of humanity that compose the flotsam and jetsam of Piccadilly. Thus is introduced a cabman, *Nightie*, and a tramp, *Burns*, the former a social philosopher whose academy has been the street, and the latter a weak-minded unregenerate born to the complacent resignation of the confirmed idler.

The first few minutes of the action are thus filled with delightful whimsicality until *Waverton*, returning unexpectedly, surprises his servant at his favorite pastime. For an instant the wealthy bachelor is provoked but, attracted by the novelty of *Pine's* idea, goes himself into the street and brings back *Margaret Summers*, a young woman whom he has found lying exhausted and choked by the fog on his doorstep. It is at this point that coincidence rises to shape the course of the play for *Waverton* discovers that *Margaret* is a former governess in the family of his step-sister, *Lady Hurley*, who six years before had been banished because of his too great fondness for her. Faithful to him and caring tenderly for the child of whom he is the father, she has been living in London, though by his step-sister's interception of his letters, he has lost all trace of her.



Photograph by White, New York

Edgar Selwyn as the *Arab* and Virginia Hammond as *Mary Hilbert* in "The Arab"



Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago

Alexander Calvert as *Foljambe*; George Arliss as *Disraeli* and Ian MacLaren as *Charles* in "*Disraeli*"

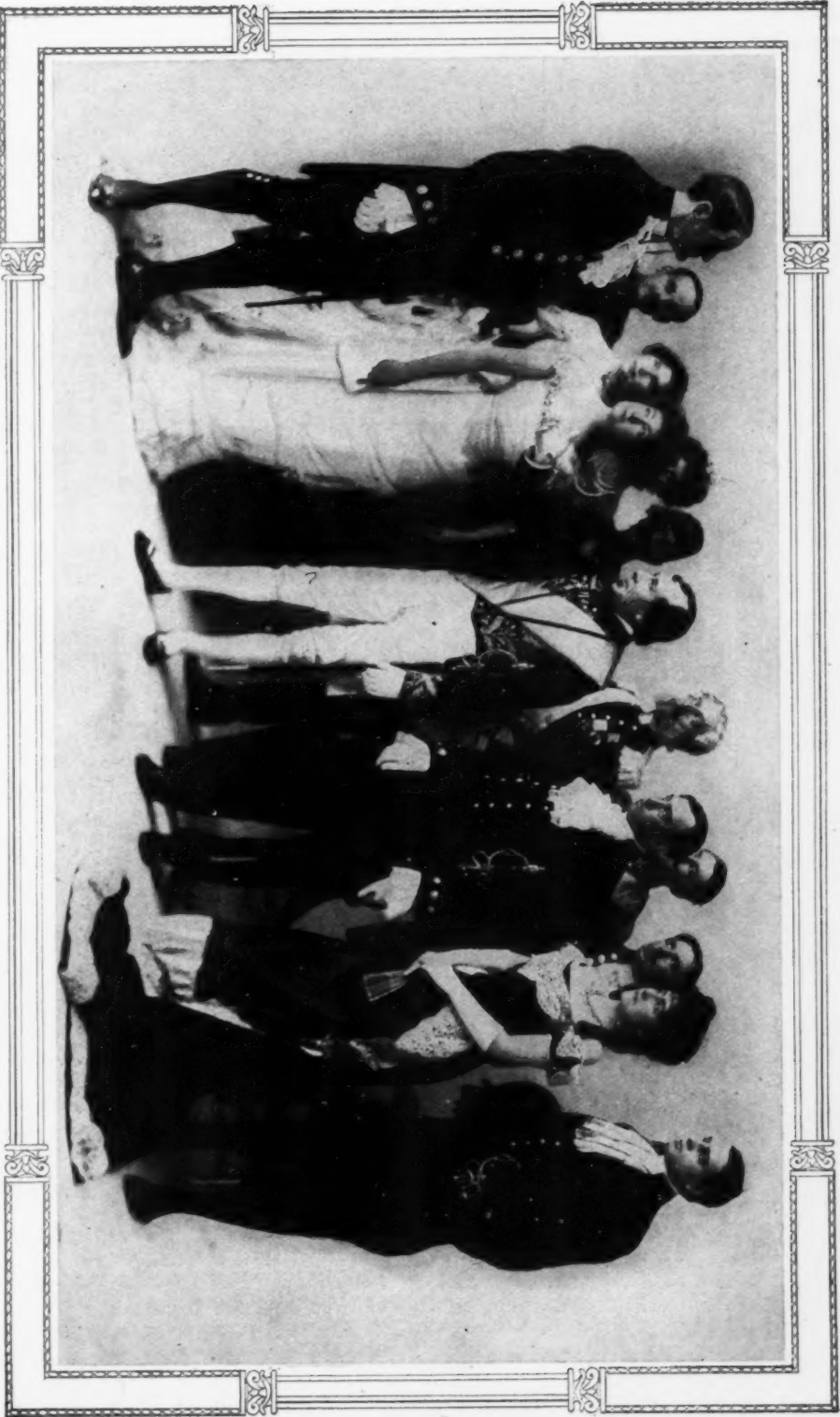
With the unexpected re-entrance of *Margaret* into the bachelor's life the play instantly takes on a dramatic interest. *Waverton* already is engaged to marry *Beatrice Dainton* for whom he has a deep devotion. But the purity and womanliness of *Margaret's* nature and the treachery of which both have been the victims arouse his deep resentment. Her stories of their boy also awaken in him a fatherly pride and impel him to make whatever manly reparation lies in his power.

Meanwhile *Burns* has been installed in the flat as an under servant, although he is sullenly resentful of the captivity which such a happy change in his fortunes implies. His emaciated figure, shorn, shaved and bathed, however, is a great asset to the play, for some of his scenes with *Margaret's* little boy, *Peter*, who has been sent for, are altogether delicious. The little chap remains grave and unresponsive to the attentions which *Waverton* bestows upon him. But when confronted by the derelict, *Burns*, he instinctively recognizes in him a creature of his own kind, by the fate of birth an outcast upon society. The child's reserve disappears and he extends his little hand. He sees in the man a creature who stands upon his own level—the bond of sympathy between them is instantly complete.

While deep in a discussion of the predicament in which fate has cast them, *Margaret* and *Waverton* are surprised by *Beatrice* and *Lady Hurley* who naturally demand immediate explanations. The elder woman, whose actions years before are responsible for the whole matter, insists that her niece leave the contaminating presence of *Margaret* and her boy. The girl, however, is of stronger fiber and insists upon hearing the story to its end.

At this point the latent wanderlust of *Burns* bursts forth and he entices little *Peter* away with tales of exciting adventure at rabbit-hunting. Their absence is soon discovered and *Waverton* sets out in pursuit, which leaves *Beatrice* and *Margaret* together and leads to a scene that is notable for its touching sincerity in the course of which the rich girl learns that *Margaret's* love for the father of her child has endured through all her trials. She therefore determines to withdraw whatever claims she has upon him and leaves the mother at the final curtain happy in the arms of the father of little *Peter* who, by this time, *Waverton* has recovered.

With such freshness and charm is the story of "*Passers-By*" told that its improbabilities vanish in the sentiment it awakens. And sympathetic must be a tale which preserves a theatrical audience's



Photograph by Moffet Studio, Chicago

A scene from the last act of "Disraeli," with George Arliss in the title rôle in center

respect, free from maudlin sentimentality, for the mother of an illegitimate child. Vulnerable as the play may become in a cold analysis, it is wholly delightful in the charm which Mr. Chambers' abundant fancy weaves about it. In its literary style and finish it ranks high among all recent London plays.

The strength of the general performance lies in Mr. Julian Royce as the valet, Mr. Ernest Lawford as the tramp, and Mr. A. G. Andrews as the night cabby. The warmest appeal of the performance is through a remarkably precocious impersonation of little *Peter* by a child actor, Master Pullman. The weakness of the performance rests in Mr. Richard Bennett who, as *Waverton*, does not catch the British flavor of the character, and Miss Louise Rutter who is inadequate to the rôle of *Margaret Summers*. Miss Rosalie Toller, as *Beatrice Dainton*, partly redeems the feminine side of the cast.

IN the unending progression of new plays the comedies which reflect only familiar phases of contemporary life and character in this country and England have of late become so very prevalent that the appearance of a romantic drama of exotic interest, set in picturesque, unfamiliar environment, is a thrice welcome relief. Such an unusual play is Mr. Edgar Selwyn's "The Arab," perhaps a not very notable play, but one which, if only because of its well-drawn hero character, a young Bedouin sheik, which the author himself impersonates with the utmost sympathy and understanding, is well worthy of a moment's attention.

This artful and artless child of the Syrian desert is *Jamil Abdullah Azam* who has left the roving tribe of which his father is the aged chief to become a dragoman. "The best dragoman in all the world," he confidently boasts and then, to prove his assertion, exhibits a certificate of character given to him by some American clients which brands him as a liar and a thief. A Christian? Yes, he has been a Christian three or four times, only to backslide because the presents he has received for his conversion have not come up to his expecta-

tions. Only a Bible has been given to him when he has hoped for a horse or, at the very least, a wife. But he is ready to desert the religion of his fathers again since the influence of *Mary Hilbert*, the daughter of an American missionary near Damascus, has created a strange interest in his guileless breast.

Turkish diplomacy is doing its nefarious work in the province. The Ottoman governor has treacherously withdrawn the Turkish garrison of the town and secretly invited the Bedouins in the neighborhood to massacre the Americans of the village and the American missionaries as well, which will relieve the Turks of the responsibility of the crime. All this *Jamil* knows. He has tried to warn the Americans through *Mary*, but they will not believe him. So he must find a means of his own to frustrate the attack.

At length the missionaries take alarm. At the instance of the Turkish governor the children are sent to Damascus in charge of a patrol. The intention is to allow them to fall into the murderous hands of a band lying in wait, but *Jamil* saves them and returns in time to sound a warning against the Turk. Again his word is doubted. The stupid missionaries learn to believe him only when it is too late.

The Bedouin tribe selected to accomplish the massacre happens to be the one of which *Jamil's* father is the sheik. They are pressing to the walls of the village when word comes that their aged chief is dead and the wise men of their council have proclaimed *Jamil* to be supreme. This puts a different complexion on the matter for, though *Jamil* is shot by the treacherous governor, he manages to gasp the order which saves the lives of the Christians.

What wounded hero of stage romance is not nursed back to life by the woman he adores? Such is the reward of *Jamil*, Arab though he be. Mr. Selwyn does not dare to defer to the sentimentality of audiences to the extent that the young Bedouin chief marries his benefactress and conducts her in triumph to his tent upon the shifting sands of his native desert. *Mary* merely bids him hope. And

for her good we trust he will continue to hope until he is gathered at last to the celestial embrace which awaits all the children of Mahomet.

Mr. Henry B. Harris's picturesque production of the play quite atones for the unevenness in its interest and the occasional lapses in its action. The Syrian street scenes, with their variegated life and gaily colored bazaars, are vividly pictured, and there is much romantic charm to the scenes in the courtyard of the Mission. Whenever Mr. Selwyn is on the stage the interest does not lag. Of the remainder of the long cast it is sufficient to note that Miss Virginia Hammond is the missionary's daughter in whom feminine attractiveness and religious zeal are blended in equal quantities.

THE dramatist and the actor court a great risk when they set out to reproduce a famous world-figure whose personality and career lie so close to the present that they have not been dimmed and softened in the perspective of time. Consequently there may arise the objection that the *Benjamin Disraeli* of Mr. George Arliss's imagination in Mr. Louis N. Parker's drama, "Disraeli," is not in every respect the Lord Beaconsfield of the third quarter of the nineteenth century in England. Such contention may be correct, but it is not a matter of supreme importance in Mr. Arliss's fine example of histrionic art—a feat of acting which has had no equal since the curtain was drawn on the careers

of Irving and Mansfield. The essential fact is that, on the lines laid down by Mr. Parker, Mr. Arliss creates an ideal faithful to the famous Premier of England in its larger aspects, and then, with the aid of his brilliant imagination and rich technical resource, proceeds to make it a living, breathing figure.

Nor does Mr. Parker's play pretend to be faithful to recorded fact. The achievement in *Disraeli's* life which he makes the cornerstone of the drama is the purchase of the Suez Canal and the creation of British empire in India. Around this nucleus he draws a picture



Photograph by
Hall, New York

Robert Warwick as *Gutdo* and Flora
Zabelle as *Nella* in "The Kiss Waltz"

of the times, with *Disraeli* always in the foreground, revealing him in the domestic circle as a devoted husband; in the mazes of diplomacy as a cynical, crafty statesman; in the moment of political opposition as a creature of wrathful, indomitable will, and in the hour of his triumph as the magnetic leader of Victorian destinies.

In the opening act *Disraeli* is seen rising above the petty affront of the young *Viscount Deeford* whose marriage to *Lady Clarissa Pevensey* he proceeds to make possible by accepting the young aristocrat as his secretary and launching him on a diplomatic career. In the second the famous *coup* of the Suez purchase has been conceived. *Disraeli* is harassed by *Lumley Foljambe* and *Mrs. Noel Travers*, spies of Russia, who have made their way into his offices in Downing Street and are conspiring to frustrate his plans. He fights them on their own ground of crafty deception, and while apparently oblivious of their intent, thwarts them at every point.

Sir Michael Probert, the stupid head of the Bank of England, has refused to finance the Canal purchase in the absence of Parliamentary sanction and *Disraeli* turns in his extremity to the private banker, *Hugh Meyer*. *Viscount Deeford*, meanwhile, has concluded the negotiations with the bankrupt Khedive of Egypt and *Disraeli* is on the brink of his greatest political triumph when word comes that *Meyer* has been ruined by Russian influence. How the famous statesman sends for *Sir Michael Probert* and bullies him into using the resources of the Bank of England to re-establish *Meyer's* credit in the financial world forms the climax of the play and supplies for Mr. Arliss his finest dramatic opportunity. The concluding scene is a reception in Downing Street in which *Disraeli*, ever the devoted husband, thinks only of his wife in the hour when he is to receive the grateful recognition of his sovereign.

The character, not the play, is the thing in "*Disraeli*," but, considering the success of the former, the latter suffices. Mr. Arliss dominates the company and he has the competent support of Miss

Marguerite St. John as *Lady Beaconsfield*, Miss Elsie Leslie as the girlish *Lady Pevensey*, Mr. Ian MacLaren as the stupid *Viscount Deeford*, Mr. Herbert Standing as the stubborn *Sir Michael Probert*, Mr. Oscar Ayde as the Jewish private banker, and Mr. Alexander Calvert and Miss Margaret Dale as the two Russian spies.

NO chronicle of a month's adventure in that region of Playland which lies contiguous to Broadway is complete these days without recording the blooming of at least one new Viennese operetta. The candidate from the Danube eligible for attention this time is "*The Kiss Waltz*" which has already enjoyed a career in several of the European capitals. It takes its name from one of the dreamy rhythms of its composer, Mr. C. M. Ziehrer, which also is the mainspring of the intrigues of its leading characters. The story has been Americanized by Mr. Edgar Smith and lyrically embellished by Mr. Matthew Woodward.

What there is of plot centers around the character of *Guido Spini*, a waltz composer whose music makes all women his worshippers. He loves the *Baroness von Bernau*, but is forced to make pretended love to the *Countess Wildenberg* in order to pursue his heart quest in safety. Danger arises and unlimited complications follow in the opposition of the *Countess's* jealous husband. There are also, an eccentric American millionaire and his wife of Malapropian tendencies in search of a bargain in titles, and the other personages, distinguished and humble, inevitably encountered in all operatic populations.

Mr. Charles Bigelow and Miss Eva Davenport as the eccentrics supply a decidedly American brand of humor in an atmosphere as decidedly foreign. The dominant waltz melody would fare much better if it were sung by almost anyone other than Mr. Robert Warwick who roars like the Bull of Bashan. However, he cuts an attractive figure as the compounder of the melodic love potions. Miss Elsa Ryan dances away with the production. Her feet are as nimble as her personality is pleasing.